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Bengal in the Sixteenth Century, A. D.

BY

J. N. DAS GUPTA

BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD,
OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, LONDON, BARRISTER-AT-LAW,
PROFESSOR, PRESIDENCY COLLEGE,
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INAUGURAL

THE STUDY OF HISTORY

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, AND FELLOW-STUDENTS:

Comte has told us that the growing passion of modern times for historical studies is a happy symptom of philosophical regeneration. But before dwelling on the importance of these studies and entering on an examination of the subject or rather subjects which I have undertaken to talk over with you, I beg in the first place to express my thankfulness and deep sense of gratitude to you especially, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, and to the Senate and Syndicate of our University for giving me this opportunity of appearing before you as University Reader in History. For I deem it a high privilege to be thus called upon, in however humble a capacity, to indicate new lines of study and methods of research to our younger generation at this critical juncture in the intellectual history of our land. To me this is ample recompense for whatever I may have tried to do during the last few years as one of the band of teachers attached to the constituent colleges of our corporate body, as an unworthy member of that company of devoted workers who have given their best, and who are ever striving even under great discouragements to serve the cause which is your cause as much as theirs, *viz.*, that of diffusion of true knowledge in this ancient and once famous home of learning.

Under the stimulus of the new regulations of our University, there are visible signs of an intellectual awakening throughout Bengal. New ideals have arisen in our academic world, and earnest endeavours are being made for their realisation, as far as one can judge, not without a fair measure of success. This consideration, coupled with the fact that I am addressing my fellow-students in Bengal has largely determined

the choice of the subject of my discourses. For it seemed to me, under the circumstances, not altogether inappropriate to try to study the past of Bengal, and there is a special fittingness in the task if that past can be elucidated with the help of materials derived and evidence gathered from some masterpiece of Bengali literature. If we have had in the past successful examples of the economic interpretation of history, we have no less successful examples of historical interpretation of literature. I have hence ventured to invite you to study the social and economic condition of Bengal in the 16th century of the Christian era with the help of a few Bengali poems whose names are household words with the gentry as well as the peasantry of this province.

Moreover, it has always seemed to me that the old vernacular poetry of our land deserves more respectful consideration at the hands of our scholars and historians than it at present receives. If the reconstruction of the past of our home-land is to be a successful undertaking, part at least of the materials for that reconstruction should be sought in the moth-eaten and perhaps rotting palm-leaf pages of old *Puthis,* the manuscripts in the possesssion of the managers and organisers of our indigenous *Tols.* One of the first steps in this process ought to be the preservation, the deciphering and a correct rendering of these ancient heirlooms of our race. One of the charges which at one time it was the fashion to bring against Indian Literature as a whole is that it is weakest on its historical side, —that there is no true *Itihas* in its department of *Itihas.* It used to be said that Indians are lacking in the instinct of historical research, and that unlike Egypt, unlike Crete, the scenes of some of the noblest achievements of the archeologist and the excavator, India offers no monument for the study of the antiquarian and the historian. The work done by the Imperial Archeological Department in India during the last few years, however, has to some extent disabused the public mind of this latter idea, and while it is true that India presents

few monuments above her surface to be read by every superficial observer as he runs, there is no lack of material underground, relics of her remote past waiting to be unearthed by the pickaxe and the shovel of the patient explorer. Our University also in its desire to foster a genuine love of letters and to encourage a spirit of research as well as a critical mental attitude amongst its graduates has taken a notable step in our days by making a knowledge of the vernacular literatures of the province obligatory in all its Examinations.

The result is seen in a remarkable literary awakening in the land. A strong stimulus has been given to the publication of vernacular books. Translations from our old classical works, translations of the treasures of foreign literatures, new versions of old and familiar things, are now pouring in upon us in an uninterrupted stream. All of this, as is only to be expected, is not likely to be permanent additions to our national literature, but they afford a striking object-lesson of the work which it is in the power of Universities to achieve, and they are evidence of a remarkable indigenous literary activity in the present generation. Then again quite recently we have been made familiar with the idea of an Oriental Institute, a central academy for the study of India's past, the importance of which study even from a purely utilitarian point of view it is hardly possible to exaggerate. A great poet who is also a great satirist, and the greatness of whose achievements as a poet is sometimes marred by his satire, has told us that the East and the West can never meet. India however is a land of dreams and every true-hearted Indian is a dreamer of dreams. The dream which some of us, during the last few eventful years, have been dreaming is that the East and the West have already met, and that for the welfare of humanity, for the upward march and development of the race, the civilisation of the future should be a composite civilisation in which the ideals of the East and the ideals of the West should stand side by

side, and in which the heart of the East should learn to beat in unison with the heart of the West. And how can this be a reality without a better mutual understanding of our respective past?

The present therefore seems to be a favourable moment for carrying on historical and sociological researches such as I contemplate, and which the schemes of studies drawn up under our new University regulations would seem to favour.

It has been remarked that happy is the land which has no history. When one recalls to his mind the vigorous controversies which from time to time enliven our otherwise somewhat monotonous academic life regarding the scope of particular sciences and the methods of investigation proper to them, one feels inclined to think that happy is the science without a history. Unfortunately for the historian, this can never be the case with the subject of his study, for history has a long history of its own. And this has been one of the unfortunate peculiarities of the Muse of history that she never completely forgets or lays aside her old habits, but goes on acquiring new habits and adding new ambitions to her old tendencies. It seemed at first that Clio was intent on aping and somewhat slavishly imitating the graces of her sister Muses. History as an art seemed almost to pride in being a branch of general literature. But with the advent of the 19th century came a change, and now though the old habits subsist, for picturesque history is still with us, history has proudly stepped forth as an independent science, engaged in the search of abstract truth, true to the kindred points of Heaven and Earth, yet at times somewhat detached from the homely realities of our practical life.

There can be little doubt that history has its beginning in story-telling, that it is Epic in its origin. The European classical scholar has only to think of the Homeric poems, the Indian classicist of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* in this

connection. But it seems to me that that which distinguishes history from general literature, that which constitutes so to speak its differentia, *viz.*, the application of criticism, has never been altogether wanting in the pages of the true historian. The application of criticism may not have been a conscious process. It did not always take the form of a conscious quest for truth. But it was there in the attempt to build on the experiences of the past an ideal to mould the conduct of the statesman and of the citizen in the present as also in the future, or in the attempt to point a moral for the edification of coming generations.

The first Greek historian told his contemporaries that "the general purpose of his work was to preserve the memory of past events and record great actions which deserve the meed of fame." "He esteemed the aim of the historian to be exactly the same as the aim of the Epic poet." But when we come to the next stage we have already advanced a step nearer to our modern ideas, for Thucydides tells us, "The accurate knowledge of what has happened will be useful, because according to human probability similar things will happen again". The note of criticism differentiating the scope of history proper from that of general literature is clearly discernible in the warning voice of Polybius. "Surely," he reminds us, "an historian's object should be not to amaze his readers by a series of thrilling anecdotes, nor should he aim to produce speeches which *might* have been delivered, nor to study dramatic propriety, in detail, like a writer of tragedy. On the contrary, his function is above all to record with fidelity what was actually said or done, no matter how commonplace it may be." As Prof. Bury speaking of the older view of the utility of history observes:—

> The two greatest of the ancient historians, Thucydides and Polybius, held that it might be a guide for good conduct, as containing examples and warnings for statesmen; and it was generally regarded in Greece and at Rome as a store-house of concrete

> instances to illustrate political and ethical maxims. Cicero called history in this sense *Magistra Vitae* and Dionysius designated it "Philosophy by examples." And this view, which ascribed to it at best the function of teaching statesmen by analogy, at worst the duty of moral edification, prevailed generally till the last century. Of course it contained a truth which we should now express in a different form by saying that history supplies the material for political and social science. This is a most important function: but if it were the only function, if the practical import of history lay merely in furnishing examples of causes and effects, then history in respect of practical utility would be no more than the handmaid of social science.

Such was the conception of history before the advent of Christianity. The interest of the historian is secular. He contemplates, and his interest is confined to things mundane. But with the advent of Christianity, historians began to busy themselves in justifying the ways of God to man. Orosius for example, writing under the influence of St. Augustine himself, saw in the ancient classical world nothing but signs of God's wrath. Plagues and pestilences, wars and consequent loss of human lives, are but indications of divine judgment on an unregenerate world. The example thus set, the use thus made of history, was not likely to be lost sight of in the 17th century, when bitter theological controversies rent the Christian world into twain. Thus if in the classical world there was the danger that history might come to be the hand-maid of poetry and of the drama, she now ran the risk of being the bond-slave of theology. For Leo and Luther, Roman Catholic and Protestant alike appealed to history in support of their cause. If the Magdeberg Centuries appealed to history for evidence to prove the diabolical origin of the Papacy, Baronius was not far behind in appealing to the same source to prove that the doings of the Protestants were but the workings of the Devil. History had to be rescued from this bondage, and the work of liberation began with the beginning of the 18th century, a work which was perhaps inaugurated by Machi-

avelli—with his high estimation of history as an instructress in politics, but in which the English Gibbon and the Scotch Robertson took an honourable and a distinguished part. But above all we have to speak of the influence of Montesquieu and of his Spirit of Laws in rescuing history from this thraldom to Theology. His thesis—the relativity of human institutions—went a great way in effecting this liberation. Then came the upheaval of the French Revolution and the cry for new constitutions, which completed the process and history resumed once again her old ways of thought and action.

It should however be noticed that the dominating influence in the earlier decades of the 18th century, was the spirit of Cosmopolitanism. This in course of time gave place to the spirit of Nationality, whence came a strong and powerful stimulus to the study of History in every country in Europe. It came to be strongly felt that the traditions and past experiences of the race are a precious heritage which should be carefully studied and properly valued. This conviction fell in with the scientific ideas of the age—the ideas of Evolution and of slow and gradual development. This junction of the cry of Nationality with the scientific conception of Evolution marks a turning-point in the history of human thought, and brought about a revolution in our conception of the nature and utility of the study of history. In the memorable words, uttered in this very city, of one of our former Vice-Chancellors, Sir Henry Maine—who had felt the full force of the spirit of his age with its craving for a scientific treatment of the problems of social life:—

> Among all our subjects of study there is no doubt as to which is the one to which belongs the future. The fact is that within the last fifteen or twenty years there has arisen in the world of thought a new power and a new influence—not the direct but the indirect influence of the physical sciences, of the science of experiment and observation. The landmarks between the fields of knowledge are being removed: the methods of culti-

> vation are more than suspected to be the same for all. It is now affirmed and was felt long before it was affirmed that the truth of history if it exists cannot differ from any other form of truth. There can be no essential difference between the truth of the Astronomer, of the Physiologist and of the Historian. The great principle that underlies all our knowledge of the physical world that nature is ever consistent with herself must also be true of human nature and human society which is made of human nature. It is not, indeed, meant that there are no truths except of the external world but that all truth of whatever character must conform to the same conditions, so that if indeed history be true it must teach that which every other science teaches—continuous sequence, inflexible order and eternal law.

Indeed one of the greatest achievements of the nineteenth century is the application of scientific methods to historical studies. It came to be strongly felt that the present has grown out of the past, that there is a gradual process of evolution and slow development in the things and institutions around us, and that to understand the present we must study the past. By the side of the ideal of the German historian Ranke, which had served as a trumpet-call in his day—namely, "I do not aspire to know how things were bound to happen: I am contented to know how they *did* happen"—a text which I fear must still be preached—rose the idea that in the origin of a people or an institution lies the clue to its nature. The English exponent of the historical method, the English disciple of Savigny, while firmly believing in the reality and the possibility of moral progress, "often dwells on the idea that the greater part of the social and intellectual structure of a nation is bequeathed to it by former generations, that unconscious tradition is perhaps the most potent agent in historical life, that the margin of change is surprisingly small and progressive nations quite exceptional." As Dr. Herford, speaking of the development of historical studies in the Germany of the 19th century had occassion to remark—History contains a good deal of mere accident, something even of sheer chaos. But those aspects of it had been abundantly

represented in the historical writing of the past, it was not amiss that it should be re-studied in the light of a conviction that apparent chaos was cosmos in disguise: that every apparent new beginning was the climax of a long preparation, every revolution the simple disclosure of slowly accumulated forces; and every feature, every activity of a given social community vitally interrelated with every other.

In Prof. Bury's words—"A right notion of the bearing of history on affairs, both for the statesman and for the citizen, could not be formed or formulated until men had grasped the idea of human development. This is the great transforming conception which enables history to define her scope. The idea was first started by Leibnitz, but, though it had some exponents in the interval, it did not rise to be a governing force in human thought till the 19th century, when it appears as the true solvent of the anti-historical doctrines which French thinkers and the French Revolution had arrayed against the compulsion of the past. At the same time, it has brought history into line with other sciences, and, potentially at least, has delivered her from the political and ethical encumbrances which combined to impede her after the introduction of scientific methods." In this connection, specially with reference to Ranke, I should remind you of Lamprecht—round whose name and work rages a vigorous controversy. The purely political historian enquires with Ranke, Lamprecht tells us—how it happened. He desired to know how it became. As Gooch puts it in his recently published work—History and Historians of the 19th Century, "The genetic must be substituted for the narrative method involving a survey of the whole mass of circumstances, material and intellectual, out of which events grow. Living in a scientific age the historian must investigate causation."

The scientific conception of *evolution* seriously affected history in another direction. We cannot understand the present without the help of the past: the past is inseparably

connected with the present. If this is the case, how can you cut up history into little bits and different periods, and say this is ancient history and that modern. Thus we come to the conception of the unity of history,* a thesis which that great Oxford teacher, Freeman, maintained with so much eloquence and emphasis. Let us pause for a moment and see in brief, in passing, how this idea affects our study of the history of our land. We divide the history of India for conveniences of study into the Hindu Period, the Mahomedan Period and the British Period. Are we justified in regarding these as so many air-tight compartments having no reference or relation to each other? How can we hope to understand the land-revenue policy or the administrative system of Akbar or his dealings with the Rajputs without knowing something of the genius and characteristics of Hindu Civilisation? And how unhistorical, how untruthful, is the view which regards the rise and development of British Power in the East as the sudden in-rushing of an European element into an Asiatic void?

The idea of the unity of history has now passed into a common-place. It is a necessary corollary of the scientific conception of evolution. But there is a second corollary, or rather another aspect of it, which is not so generally recognised or emphasised. If you cannot separate the past from the

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* In reference to Freeman's favourite thesis we may note in passing what Gooch tells us:—

The central doctrine of Freeman's works was the Unity of History. The Rede Lecture, delivered in 1873, is a land-mark in English Historiography. From early Greece to the Roman Empire, from Imperial Rome to mediæval and modern Europe there was no break; and he rendered an immense service to historical thinking and teaching by his emphasis on continuity. Yet Stubbs devoted a considerable part of one of his lectures to an attack on his friend's philosophy. Classical, mediæval and modern history, he declared, could be usefully studied apart. In the world of action there was continuity, but in the world of thought and feeling, about which Freeman knew little and cared less, there were deep gulfs. A graver criticism may now be made. Since Freeman enunciated his doctrine, the historian's horizon has widened. His vision was confined to Aryan Europe. But Greece can no longer be treated as the starting-point of civilisation, and the discovery of the Ancient East has altered our perspective.

present, should you exclude the future altogether from the contemplation of the historian?

In the words of a great master of the principles of history teaching:—

> Science tells us that, apart from the incalculable chances of catastrophes, man has still myriads and myriads of years to live on this planet under physical conditions which need not hinder his development or impair his energies. That is a period of which his whole recorded history of six or seven thousand years is a small fraction.
>
> The dark imminence of this unknown future in front of us, like a vague wall of mist every instant receding with all its indiscernible silent reformations, undreamed ideas, new religions, must not be neglected if we would grasp the unity of history in its highest sense. For though we are unable to divine what things indefinite time may evolve, though we cannot look forward with the eyes of "the prophetic soul of the wide world brooding on things to come," yet the unapparent future has a claim to make itself felt as an idea controlling our perspective. It commands us not to regard the series of what we call ancient and mediæval history as leading up to the modern age and the twentieth century; it bids us to consider the whole sequence up to the present moment as properly no more than the beginning of a social and psychical development, whereof the end is withdrawn from our view by countless milleniums to come.

Thus the historian lives and works in the present, with his hand resting on the past, his gaze fixed on the future.

It is pleasant to think how this conception of the unity and continuity of history serves as an antidote to that unhistorical mood of mind which would find the goal of humanity in a long past golden age. Rousseau declares that man born free is found everywhere in chains, and wants us to go back to nature. But the true historian who understands his vocation and knows what he is talking about can never preach the lesson of going back. The goal of humanity, if there is any goal at all, if it is not a process of constant

progression, lies in the future and not in the past. The burden of the historian's song never is—Go back, O ye tired mariners. It is always—O my brothers and fellow-workers, follow the gleam.

Men my brothers, men the workers
ever reaping something new,
That which they have done but earnest
of the things that they shall do.

This then is the view of the nature and utility of history, which I beg you to accept; and hence I urge the supreme importance of historical studies in a scheme of liberal education; for I take it that Milton's definition of liberal education still holds good as when it was first put forth in his Tractate of Education. "I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." This fine definition has hardly been improved upon even in our days.

But leaving aside for a moment the points I have so far ventured to place before you, I would be content to base my plea for a serious study of history in the India of the present day on a few somewhat commonplace practical considerations. I would urge the utility, and even the supreme necessity of the study of history in our days because of the preparation it affords for citizenship, because of the light it sheds and the help it so generously extends to the conscious efforts of a people engaged in the upbuilding of social ideals, but above all because of its disciplinary effect on individual character.

That great Oxford teacher, the venerable Dr. Stubbs, to whose industry and enthusiasm and soberness of judgment

history will for ever remain indebted told a distinguished audience at the University of Oxford some fifty years ago :—

I am thoroughly convinced that the purpose which is answered by the study of history is twofold—it is at once the process of acquisition of a stock of facts, an ignorance of which unfits a man from playing the humblest part as a citizen ; and it is an educational discipline directed to the cultivation of powers for whose development, as it seems to me, no other training is equally efficacious. The disciplinary benefit of the study of history is to make people honest and intelligent in their view of public events. It is a training of the judgment.

These words which are as necessary to remember now as when they were spoken, I would beg my fellow-students here in Bengal never to forget.

In speaking of the development of ideas regarding historical studies I have so long confined myself to European countries. But I may be permitted to make a passing reference to two of the Oriental countries, China and India. We are told by Demetrius Boulger :—

If the reader wishes to know what conception Chinese historians had of their duties, the following story taken from the preface to Mailla's great work may throw some light upon the subject:—

"In the reign of the Emperor Ling Wang of the Chow dynasty, B. C. 548, Changkong, Prince of Tsi, became enamoured of the wife of Tsonichow, a general, who resented the affront and killed the prince. The Historians attached to the household of the Prince recorded the fact and named Tsonichow as the murderer. On learning this the general caused the principal historian to be arrested and slain and appointed another in his place. But as soon as the new historian entered upon his office he recorded the exact facts of the whole occurrence including the death of his predecessor and the cause of his death. Tsonichow was so much enraged at this

that he ordered all the members of the Tribunal of History to be executed. But at once the whole literary class in the principality of Tsi set to work exposing and denouncing the conduct of Tsonichow who soon perceived that his wiser plan would be to reconstitute the Tribunal and to allow it to follow its own devices." What could be finer, too, than the following reply, given fifteen centuries later by the President of the Tribunal of History of the Empire to the Tang Emperor Taitsong, who asked if he might be permitted to see what was written about himself in the state memoirs? "Prince," said the President, "the Historians of the Tribunal write down the good and the bad actions of princes, their praiseworthy and also their reprehensible words, and everything that they have done, good or bad in their administration. We are exact and irreproachable on this point and none of us dare be wanting in this respect. This impartial severity ought to be the essential attribute of history, if it is wished that she should be a curb upon princes and the great, and that she should prevent their committing faults. But I do not know that any Emperor up to the present has ever seen what was written about him." To this the Emperor said, "But supposing I did nothing good, or that I happened to commit some bad action, is it you, President, who would write it down? "Prince, I should be overwhelmed with grief, but being entrusted with a charge so important as that of presiding over the Tribunal of the Empire, could I dare to be wanting in my duty?" These two stories may suffice to show the spirit in which the earlier Chinese Historians undertook their work.

As to the Mahomedan historians of India, we may note the statement of the author of the *Tabakati Akbari*, one of the best known of our records of the Mussulmans in India, that he had from his youth, "according to the advice of his father, devoted himself to the study of works of history, which are the means of strengthening the understanding of men of education, and of affording instruction by examples to men of observa-

tion," a statement which sounds like an echo of the classical proposition that History is philosophy teaching by examples.

In reference to historical literature in Hindu India, I feel tempted to quote the following opening words of Stein's introduction to the monumental *Rājataraṇgiṇī* of Kalhana—"It has often been said of the India of the Hindus that it possessed no history. The remark is true if we apply it to history as a science and art, such as classical culture in its noblest prose-works has bequeathed it to us. But it is manifestly wrong if by history is meant either historical development or the materials for studying it. India has never known among its Sastras the study of history such as Greece and Rome cultivated or as modern Europe understands it. Yet the materials for such a study are equally at our disposal in India. They are contained not only in such original sources of information as inscriptions, coins and antiquarian remains generally ; advancing research has also proved that written records of events or of traditions concerning them have by no means been wanting in ancient India." Stein's observations remind us of the great historical Kavyas, the Charitas, such as the Harsa Charita of Bana—the historical significance of which branch of Indian Literature we all now recognise—thanks to the lucid introduction of Professor Buhler to his edition of the Vikramanka-deva-charita of Bilhana. We all realise that the fact that the charitas treat of contemporary events constitutes an "undoubted advantage, though that is impaired to no small extent by the obvious limitations implied by the panegyrical character of these poems." To Kalhana himself his great work is primarily a kavya; but I venture to think that he had a very definite conception of his task as a narrator of events. Of this the introductory verses with which his work opens furnish characteristic evidence. We read, "worthy of praise is that power of true poets whatever it may be, which surpasses even the stream of nectar, in as much as by it their own bodies of glory as well as those of others obtain immortality; who else but poets resemb-

ling Prajapatis and able to bring forth lovely productions, can place the past times before the eyes of men?" In this statement we have an enunciation of the poet's view of the relation between his art and the subject-matter of his narrative. "It is his skill as a Kavi, the merit of his poetic composition, which is to save from oblivion the history of his country." This is immediately followed by a recognition of the importance of historical impartiality. After the panegyric on poetic intuition, he declares that poet alone "worthy of praise, whose words like that of a judge, keep free from love or hatred in relating the facts of the past". As Dr. Stein rightly observes, "In this emphatic declaration and the prominence given to it we feel something of the historian's spirit". The author is to make the past live, but in breathing life into the dry bones of the past he is to keep his mind free from love or hatred.

It is however to be noted, as Dr. Stein again warns us, that "neither the general drift of Hindu thought nor the specific character of Kalhana's Chronicle would justify us in looking to the latter for a conscious appreciation of what we understand as the philosophy of history. To search for the laws which explain the concatenation of events and govern the development of a nation's history, would have presupposed a mental atmosphere wholly different from that in which Kalhana lived. Inductive analysis of the lessons of history has ever been foreign to the Indian mind. Yet this fact must not lead us to assume that the Hindu Chronicler could contemplate the records of the past without being influenced by certain general ideas. Individual events present themselves to his mind not as phenomena to be traced to their causes. He looks upon them merely as illustrations of those maxims, religious, moral or legal, which made up what the Hindu designates so comprehensibly as 'Dharma'."

The conception of *Dharma* involves a belief in the doctrine of *Punyā*—the preeminently Indian idea "which explains the fortunes of individuals or a nation by the influence of spiri-

tual merits from previous birth." It also involves a belief in divine retribution—the retribution which follows upon evil government, an idea in some measure in harmony with our modern conception of the causal relation between facts. Thus the Indian historian places in close association with one another—the verdict of the judge and the judgment of the historian; *Dharma* and the sense of divine retribution working in and influencing the chain of events amid which we live and move; all which remind us also of poetic justice.

I therefore conclude by alluding once again to what I spoke of in an earlier part of this discourse, *viz.*, the connection which must always exist between History and general literature. Literature may claim precedence over history, but the two are sister Muses engaged in the same task of elevating our thoughts, ennobling our character, embellishing our mind —a fact which should not be lost sight of in the correlation of studies in our Universities.

I have already indicated that in speaking of the social and economic condition of Bengal in the 16th century of the Christian era I propose to depend mainly on materials to be derived from contemporary vernacular literature of the day. I fear, historians in India for years to come must be content to rely on materials so derived and must be prepared to gather the materials for themselves. This is a fact which adds considerably to the difficulties of their task, but to my mind it also enhances the interest of their work. A general history of India, which takes a comprehensive view of the movements and tendencies in the different provinces of this vast continent before the rise and consolidation of British Power in the East has yet to be written, a task to the accomplishment of which our newly-appointed Professor of Ancient Indian History will no doubt make invaluable contributions. In the present state of things I am not quite sure if something cannot be said in defence of the attitude of the helpless student who is content with a succession of birds-eye views of the fortunes of the

Maharatta confederacy, the consolidation of the Sikh fraternity, the meteoric career of Hyderali, and the achievements of the Moghuls at Delhi. But the way for the coming of the general comprehensive history of India must be paved and prepared by the local historian. There must be a good deal of preliminary drawing of water and hewing of wood. Folklore, dim traditions, written literary productions, inscriptions, coins, monuments and architectural remains, must all be ransacked and appealed to and laid under contribution. See what a glorious vista is thus opened to our view, what vast fields of work are thrown open even to the meanest labourer in the domain of history. He who compiles, he who merely digests, or he who undertakes the critical work of the collation of manuscripts, each has his work to do, his quota to contribute. And let us think of the level of perfection which the completed production may attain in the hands of a consummate artist by taking note of the fascinating picture of Indian chivalry painted in the pages of Tod's *Rājasthān* with materials derived from folklore and tradition and dim memories of deeds which the local bards delighted to sing and to celebrate.

May this thought serve as a trumpet-call to our younger generation of historical students, and may they be stimulated to approach their task of study and research in the spirit of the true historian!

II

THE RENAISSANCE IN BENGAL

II

THE RENAISSANCE IN BENGAL

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, AND FELLOW-STUDENTS:

We are fortunate in our sources of information regarding Bengal in the 16th Century, though of systematic history writing and chronicling of events there is little in this period, and our modern guides do not help us much. The few pages touching the 16th Century in Stewart's history of Bengal are to my mind indispensable but not very inspiring reading. Ferishtha as presented in Dow's translation stands practically on the same level, and Briggs of deserved celebrity is of course Ferishtha again. But then there is the ever to be remembered *Ain-i-Akbari* which is "partly a history of the Emperor, partly a most minute account of the revenue, household, treasury, military regulations and other matters with a Gazetteer of India and a collection of his Majesty's sayings and teachings. No other work gives such a picture of contemporary India, its learning, traditions and customs, and under the pompous style of a court journal, the most vivid glimpses of Akbar the man are disclosed amid details of etiquette, cookery recipes, or treatises upon religion."

In this connection it is interesting to note what the author of the *Tabakati Akbari* puts forth as his apologia for undertaking to write a history of India under Akbar. He found that in "the wide plains of Hindustan, which form an empire of vast extent, the governing classes had assumed the title and discharged the duties of rulers in many of its divisions, such as Dehli, Gujrat, Malwa, Bengal, and Sindh, and the authors of their times have written histories of their affairs, and have bequeathed them as memorials to posterity. *** It is most extraordinary, therefore, that not a single work containing a complete compendium of affairs of this (entire) division (of the world) has yet been written by any historian;

neither have the events connected with the centre of Hindustan, the seat of Government of this Empire, the capital Dehli, had been collected in one book."*

One ought also to refer to the wealth of materials gathered together in the 5th and 6th Volumes of Elliot's History. Above all, there are the priceless poetic gems of our vernacular literature. Of a few such gems, I propose to speak in some little detail. Before doing so I may, however, be permitted to interpolate a parenthesis. On the passing of the Ancient Monuments Act in 1904, Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India and Chancellor of our University, uttered a few memorable words. He told us, —

> "It is given to but few to realise except from books and illustrations, what the archæological treasures of India are. As a pilgrim at the shrine of beauty I have visited them, as a priest in the temple of duty have I charged myself with their reverent custody and their studious repair. * * * I might bring you much nearer home to Gaur and Pandua in this province of Bengal, in the restoration of which I received the enthu-

*The work which is best known is the *Tabakati-Nasiri* which Minhajus Siraj compiled commencing with Sultan Mu'izzu-ddin Ghori, and concluding with Nasiruddin bin Shamsuddin: from thence to the time of Sultan Firoz is written in the history of Ziai Barni; but from that time to to-day, because for the greater portion of the time there was much disturbance in India, and the people had the misfortune to be deprived of a powerful Imperial Government, I have only met with a few detached and incomplete compilations. I have not heard of a single history that comprises an account of the whole of India; and now since the whole of the inlying and outlying provinces of Hindustan have been conquered by the world-subduing sword of God's vicegerent, and all the fractions of the earth have been united in one grand whole, and many kingdoms beyond the confines of Hindustan which none of the great sovereigns who preceded His Majesty had ever acquired, have been included in his Empire, and it is to be hoped that the seven climes will yet come under the shade of the standard of the good fortune of that illustrious personage, and thus be protected and secure peace and prosperity, I conceived the idea of compiling, in a simple style, a history which should embrace an account of all the kingdoms of Hindustan, from the times of Subuktigin, 367A.H. (which is the date of the introduction of Islam into Hindustan,) up to 1001A.H., the thirty-seventh year of the Ilahi era, dividing it into chapters according to the several dynasties which reigned, closing each chapter with an account of the conquest by His Imperial Highness of the particular province under notice: the account of these victories in full detail being found in the *Akbarnama*, which Allami Abul Fazl has compiled with so much ability.

> siastic cooperation of the late Sir John Woodburn. A hundred and twenty years ago the tombs of the Afgan Kings at Gaur* were within an ace of being despoiled to provide paving-stone for St. John's Church in Calcutta. Only a few years back these wonderful remains were smothered in jungle from which they literally had to be cut free. If the public were fully aware of what has been done, Malda, near to which they are situated, would be an object of constant excursion from this place. We have similarly restored the Hindu temples of Bhubaneshwar near Cuttack and the palace and temples on the rock-fortress of Rhotasgarh."

The reference to Gaur makes one think of the times of Buktyar Khiliji and of the events which are narrated by Menhej Ali and recorded in the pages of *Tabakati Nasiri*; but also of what I take to be an invaluable historical work—*viz.* *The Ramcharita*, published as one of its *Memoirs* by the Asiatic Society, which tends to throw light on the dark pages of the history of Bengal in the first half of the 12th and the second half of the 11th Century—days which preceded the appearance of the Mahomedans in Bengal. My object in interpolating this parenthesis is to show by reference to a concrete example that even as regards Bengal we are not altogether devoid of highly valuable historical works, and to make the confession that before chosing to dwell on 16th Century Bengal I had at one time actually thought of speaking to you about the *Ramcharita*.

The 16th Century in Bengal truly witnessed a Renaissance. Undoubtedly there was a spiritual and intellectual awakening among the people. Enthusiasts travelled from place to place; mind was brought into contact with mind; there was a brisk circulation of fertilising ideas. If the classical Renaissance in Europe opened out and enlarged men's capacity for culture which in course of time has come to be an essential part of the intellectual life of the Western World, the stimulus of

*When the capital fell into decay on the decline of Mahomedan rule, Gaur was used as a brick-field and quarry by the builders of Dacca, Murshidabad and Calcutta, the right to dismantle Gaur of its enamelled bricks being farmed out to the landholders in the district in the early days of our revenue administration—*Havell.*

spiritual enthusiasm, the contact with the merchant adventurers of foreign trading nations, the liberal tolerant policy of a wise ruler anxious to attend to the educational needs of the people and prepared to grapple with the difficulties of social problems—all contributed to produce the same result in the Bengal of the 16th century. Let us remind ourselves in this connection of the pregnant words of *Burkhardht* in his *Culture of the Renaissance*, which is one of our historical classics. In Europe, with the Renaissance, we are told, man discovered himself and became a spiritual individual. The fetters of a thousand years were burst, self-realisation became the goal, and new valuations of the world and of man became current; some of the conditions which made this possible being the intense life of the city-state, the revival of the art and philosophy of antiquity, the weakening of authority, the disintegration of belief. As in Europe, so in Bengal, after years of groping in the dark, in Green's picturesque phrase, men opened their eyes and saw. In some, this newly awakened mental curiosity busied itself in thinking of the nothingness of human life, and in trying to realise the glories of the Beatific vision. In some, their devotional ardour found employment in singing the praises of the apostles of the new spirit; others again pictured the gloom which had so long prevailed in their social and political surroundings, thought of the delights of an idyllic existence, and sang of the glories and the beauties of external nature in this green lap of earth, this wonderful land of green verdure and pasture. All these phases of feeling find expression in our rich collection of *Vaishnav* literature—a collection of which any people may be justly proud. What is most to my purpose to note in the present connection is that in this literature we have many an interesting side-light on the social and political condition of Bengal in the 16th Century which curiously confirms almost in every detail the truth of the picture which I propose to present before you with the help of *Mukundram* in some of my subsequent papers.

I have made a passing reference to the remarkable personality of *Chaitanya*, and to the rich vernacular 16th Century *Vaisnav* literature. The theological aspects of this literature do not fall properly within the scope of these discourses. Neither can I pretend to speak with any authority on the philosophy of *Vaisnavism*. But no one dwelling on 16th Century Bengal can afford altogether to pass it by. The accounts, among other things, of the influence exercised by saintly characters like Isvarpuri, the devotional ardour of potentates like Protaprudra,* the wanderings of the apostles of the new faith, the many conversions made by them among the people, their constant protests against the rigidity and the cruelty of the caste rules, the intense ecstatic joys felt by these mystics as they dreamt of the Beatific vision,—each of these forms a distinct picture in the panorama of life in 16th Century Bengal unfolded in the pages of this literature, and affords valuable material for the reconstruction of the social history of the period.

Truly history repeats itself. The phenomena with which we are familiar in Europe during the Renascence meet us everywhere in the Bengal of the 16th Century. Think of the pride of the new scholars in their Alma Mater, their native seat of learning, *Navadwip*, and think of incidents like the experiences of the triumphant *Kasmiri*—a wandering scholar associated with that stage of *Chaitanya's* career when the apostle appears before us as a distinguished teacher of widespread reputation, endowed with the truly Socratic spirit of questioning men and things. We all know how in the England of the 19th Century the poetic soul of that great apostle of culture and master of criticism who spent his best energies in protesting against the inroads of philistinism on English

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* তাঁর প্রতিজ্ঞা না করিব রাজ দরশন।
মোর প্রতিজ্ঞা তাঁহা বিনা ছাড়িব জীবন ॥
যদি সেই মহাপ্রভুর না পাই কৃপাধণ।
কিবা রাজ্য কিবা দেহ সব অকারণ ॥

Chaitanya Charitamrita.

literature and English social ideals is filled with a strange and unspeakable emotion whenever he thinks of Oxford—"Beautiful City! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene—home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names and impossible loyalties. Yet steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Ages, who will deny that Oxford by her ineffable charm keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection, to beauty, in a word, which is truth seen from another side—nearer perhaps than all the science of Tubingen." Such is the enthusiastic tribute of Matthew Arnold to Oxford. Similarly the hearts of the exponents of *Nabyanya* are lifted up with pride and delight when they sing of the glories of Navadwip. "O, who can hope to sing adequately of the glories of Navadwip—the home of enthusiastic scholars, of venerable teachers and erudite Professors—the scene of a thousand learned discussions and of perpetual wit combats." Such is the tribute of *Chaitanya Bhagabat* to the Oxford of 16th Century Bengal. And then the wandering scholar. We read of the European Renascence that that was "the age of the *scholastici vagantes*—the Knights Errant of the New Learning, possessed of and practising a multitude of arts, and masters of a mysterious variety of knowledge. They are seen at the Courts of Kings and princes, in the rapidly multiplying universities, in the houses and homes of every class of men. They are famous physicians like Paracelsus and academical lecturers like Bruno." It is a picture of this state of things which we have in that remarkable scene in the old 16th Century English drama entitled Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay which is supposed to have been enacted at Oxford in the presence of King Henry on the occasion of the visit of the German Emperor to England. The Emperor comes accompanied by a triumphant wandering scholar—the redoubtable

Jaques Vandermast, who is discomfited by the English Roger Bacon at Oxford—just as the *Kasmiri* Scholar is discomfited by *Chaitanya* at *Nabadwip*. Here are the relevant portions of this highly interesting scene, from which it will be noticed that the vaunting Jaques Vandermast is an exact counterpart of our *Kasmiri* scholar and the part played by Roger Bacon corresponds exactly to the part played by *Chaitanya* in the present connection.

SCENE IX. *Oxford.*

Enter KING HENRY, *the* EMPEROR, *the* KING OF CASTILE, ELINOR, VANDERMAST, *and* BUNGAY.

Emp. Trust me, Plantagenet, these Oxford schools
Are richly seated near the river-side:
The mountains full of fat and fallow deer,
The batling pastures lade with kine and flocks,
The town gorgeous with high-built colleges,
And scholars seemly in their grave attire,
Learned in searching principles of Art.—
What is thy judgment, Jaques Vandermast?

Van. That lordly are the buildings of the town,
Spacious the rooms, and full of pleasant walks;
But for the doctors, how that they be learned,
It may be meanly, for aught I can hear.

Bun. I tell thee, German, Hapsburg holds none such.
None read so deep as Oxenford contains:
There are within our academic state
Men that may lecture it in Germany
To all the doctors of your Belgic schools.

K. Hen. Stand to him, Bungay, charm this Vandermast.
And I will use thee as a royal king.

Van. Wherein dar'st thou dispute with me?

Bun. In what a doctor and friar can.

Van.

Mighty commander of this English isle,
Henry, come from the stout Plantagenets,
Bungay is learn'd enough to be a friar;
But to compare with Jaques Vandermast,
Oxford and Cambridge must go seek their cells
To find a man to match him in his art.
I have given non-plus to the Paduans,*
To them of Sien, Florence, and Bologna,
Rheims, Louvain, and fair Rotterdam,
Frankfort, Utrecht, and Orleans:
And now must Henry, if he do me right,
Crown me with laurel, as they all have done.

Enter BACON.

Bacon. All hail to this royal company,
That sit to hear and see this strange dispute!—
Bungay, how stand'st thou as a man amaz'd?
What, hath the German acted more than thou?

Van. What art thou that question'st thus?

Bacon. Men call me Bacon.

Van. Lordly thou look'st, as if that thou wert learn'd;
Thy countenance as if science held her seat
Between the circled arches of thy brows.

K. Hen. Now, monarchs, hath the German found his match.

Emp. Bestir thee, Jaques, take not now the foil,
Lest thou dost lose what foretime thou didst gain.

Van. Bacon, wilt thou dispute?

Bacon. No.

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* Incidentally, an interesting enumeration of the various seats of learning of those days.

Unless he were more learn'd than Vandermast:
For yet, tell me, what hast thou done?

And so on, the vaunting and the contention go on, till the German is utterly nonplussed.

My friends who are more competent judges of these things than myself and who have no doubt read with wondering delight accounts of the ecstatic communings of Chaitanya and his disciples will excuse a reference to similar experiences in Europe. For I take it, in spite of the differences in ideals between Western and Eastern monasticism, in certain essential respects, the saint and the mystic are the same all the world over. M. Arnold speaking on a cognate topic reminds us "The ideal saint is a nature like Sales or Fenelon, a nature of ineffable sweetness and serenity, a nature in which struggle and revolt is over, and the whole man as far as possible to human infirmity swallowed up in love." In reference to the experiences of that beautiful soul, Eugenie De Guerin, who appeals to our love and adoration almost with a compelling force, he quotes from her journals,—

', Poor soul, poor soul, what is the matter, what would you have? Where is that which will do you good. Everything is green, everything is in bloom, all the air has a breath of flowers. How beautiful it is. Well, I will go out. No, I should be alone, and all this beauty when one is alone is worth nothing. What shall I do then? Read, write, pray, take a basket of sand on my head like that hermit saint and walk with it? Yes, work, work! Keep busy the body which does mischief to the soul."

Again we read,

"This morning I was suffering; well, at present I am calm, and this I owe to faith, simply to faith, to an act of faith. I can think of death and eternity without trouble, without alarm. Over a deep of sorrow there floats a divine calm, a suavity which is the work of God only. In vain have I tried other things at a time like this, nothing human comforts the soul, nothing human upholds it."

Matthew Arnold adds,

"The poor soul cannot rest satisfied with the triumphs of self-abasement, with the sombre joy of trampling the pride of life and of reason

> underfoot, of reducing all human hope and joy to insignificance. She repeats the magnificent words of Bossuet, words which both Catholicism and Protestantism have uttered with indefatigable iteration—at the bottom of everything one finds emptiness, but she feels as every one but the true mystic must ever feel, their incurable sterility.

Is this not also the saintly ideal of the Vaisnavas? Do we not find in the apostles of the new faith, as in Fenelon and in Francis De Sales, "the whole man as far as possible to human infirmity swallowed up in love"?

Let us compare for example the four striking lines which occur at the close of the second canto of the *Antalila* of *Chaitanya Charitamrita* in which the author brings out with characteristic bold touches what are universally regarded as the prominent and unmistakable features in Chaitany's personality; his overflowing love, his own selflessness, the teaching of self-renunciation to others, drawing out and making manifest the deep piety and devotional ardour of his many followers.*

Again, have we not in the journals of Eugenie De Guerin the spirit and the temperament which also pervade what may be looked upon as the *Tabletalk* of Chaitanya as it is recorded *e.g.* in the notes stealthily jotted down by one of the best known of his disciples *viz.*, Gobind Das and in the later, chapters of the monumental Charitamrita of Krisnadas?

Let me quote just three short texts—the first by way of illustrating one of the ideals of the Vaisnavas, the other their disregard of caste rules, the third the spirit of toleration which was slowly permeating the society of the day. As to the ideal†, we read, let the patience, the fortitude, the powers of endurance of the Vaisnavas equal the fortitude of the trees of

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* আপন কারুণ্য, লোকে বৈরাগ্যশিক্ষণ।
স্বভক্তের গাঢ়ানুরাগ প্রকটী-করণ॥
তীর্থের মহিমা, নিজভক্তে আত্মসাথ।
এক লীলায় করে প্রভু কার্য্য পাঁচ-সাত॥

† তরুসম সহিষ্ণুতা, বৈষ্ণব করিব।
ভর্ৎসন-তাড়নে কারে কিছু না বলিব॥
কাটিলেহ তরু যেন কিছু না বলয়।
শুকাইলে, মৈলে কারে পানি না মাগয়॥
এই মত বৈষ্ণব কারে কিছু না মাগিব।

the forest. Do they ever cry out in protest when the woodman's axe cuts them down? Do they ever ask for help or nourishment even when they are withering and slowly dying? As to their disregard of caste rules,* we have the passionate declaration † made in his new-born zeal by one of the neophytes to the effect that he a *mlecha*, had consorted with low class and low caste people and with those who had no scruple in slaughtering cows and persecuting Brahmins, and yet he ultimately found acceptance with the apostle himself. Then as regards the absence of a persecuting spirit we have a most important statement. We are told that the Mahomedan ruler of Gaur‡ on hearing of the multitudes who flocked round Chaitanya as his disciples declared that he is truly an apostle whom crowds follow of their own accord impelled by no selfish consideration. Hence let *Kazis* and Mahomedans practise no hostility towards the Vaisnavas. Let Chaitanya teach and preach whatever he likes. Let him have perfect liberty of prophesying.

In this connection I feel tempted to refer to that beautiful Dream of Akbar as it is presented in Tennyson's pages and to the wonderfully moving lines which translate the feelings of Abdul Fezl, and introduce Tennyson's poem.

O God in every temple I see people that see thee, and in every language I hear spoken, people praise thee.

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* দেখিয়া ব্রাহ্মণগণের হৈল চমৎকার।
বৈদিক ব্রাহ্মণ সব করেন বিচার॥
এইত সন্ন্যাসীর তেজ দেখি ব্রহ্ম সম।
শূদ্র আলিঙ্গিয়া কেনে করেন ক্রন্দন।
কাঁহা তুমি ঈশ্বর সাক্ষাৎ নারায়ণ।
কাঁহা মুঞি রাজসেবী বিষয়ী শূদ্রাধম॥
মোর দর্শন তোমায় বেদে নিষেধয়,
মোর স্পর্শে না করিলে ঘৃণা-বেদভয়॥

Interview between Chaitanya and Ramananda.

† নীচজাতি নীচসঙ্গী করি নীচকাজ।
তোমার অগ্রেতে প্রভু কহিতে বাসি লাজ॥
ম্লেচ্ছজাতি ম্লেচ্ছসেবী করি ম্লেচ্ছকর্ম্ম।
গো ব্রাহ্মণ দ্রোহি সঙ্গে আমার সঙ্গম॥

রূপ সনাতন।

‡ গৌড়েশ্বর যবন রাজা প্রভাব শুনিঞা।
কহিতে লাগিল কিছু বিস্মিত হইয়া
বিনা দানে এত লোক যার পাছে ধায়।
সেইত গোসাঞি ইহা জানিহ নিশ্চয়॥
কাজি যবন কেহো ঞিহার না কর হিংসন।
আপন ইচ্ছায় বুলুন যাহা ইহাঁর মন।

মধ্যলীলা (চৈতন্যচরিতামৃত)।

Polytheism and Islam feel after thee. Each religion says, "Thou art one, without equal." If it be a mosque, people murmur the holy prayer, and if it be a Christian Church, people ring the bell from love to Thee.

Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister, and sometimes the mosque. But it is thou whom I search from temple to temple.

Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy or orthodoxy; for neither of them stands behind the screen of thy truth. Heresy to the heretic, and religion to the orthodox.

But the dust of the rose petal belongs to the heart of the perfume seller.

Is it too fanciful to suggest that as in Bengal so in the wider India of Akbar's day there are signs of an intellectual awakening and a spiritual flowering, and that the toleration of Akbar along with the toleration preached by the Vaisnavas is but an indication of the working of the spirit of the age? It is obviously unjust to the memory of a great ruler to hold that his enlightened policy of toleration was dictated purely by considerations of expediency or attributable solely to political necessity. Students of history would rather say with Mahmud Abdul Baki, the author of *Ma-ásir-i Rahimi*, that Akbar "extended toleration to all religions and creeds, and would recognise no difference between them, his object being to unite all men in a common bond of peace."

My friends would pardon my placing before them the life history of a Vaisnav enthusiast of the 16th century, as it is presented in Vaisnav literature. I refer to the story of Haridas. Part of this story is the narrative of the fruitless attempts at tempting him by an agent employed by one of the leaders of the militant Brahmanism of the day. Similar stories illustrative of the weakness of the flesh and the final triumph of spirituality over bestial sensuality abound in Hindu mythology and Indian literature. But students of history

would prefer to be reminded of the partially analogous story of *Ambapali*—who was ultimately won over by the great Budha to virtue and morality and who renounced the world and attained to the state of an *Arhat* and as Fa Hian informs us, built a *Vihara* in honour of Budha and presented a garden to him for him to reside in.

The story of Haridas is told in *Chaitanya Charitamrita* as well as in *Chaitanya Bhagabat*. In all essential points, the two versions are identical, but the episodes to which I direct special attention are taken from the Charitamrita and are there narrated with greater fullness.

Haridas after leaving his native home lived for a time in the forests of Benapul. There he built himself a poor cottage, and spent his time in lonely prayers, depending for his subsistence on the alms charitably supplied by the people of the locality. He slowly became an object of adoration to a steadily growing band of admirers. But his purity of character and his devotional ardour only excited the animosity of the local land-lord, Ramchandra Khan, who employed an infamous agent to bring about his undoing. The plan however failed. Haridas then came to Chandpur. Hiranya and Gobardhan were the Talukdars of the place and Balaram was their priest. They presented a striking contrast to Ramchandra Khan of Benapul and never interfered with the austere practices of Haridas. Once on a time, in a moon-lit night, when a solemn stillness held the air, when the tinsel-slippered waves of the Ganges were dancing in the moonlight, a beautiful damsel, sumptuously clad, like the Dalila of scriptural narrative appearing before Samson—intruded on the meditations of Haridas. But she could not make him forget his duty towards himself or induce him to lose sight of his ideal. Then the lady said—"Men call me Maya* I am illusion and earthly love, my

* আমি মায়া, করিতে আইলাম পরীক্ষা তোমার। ব্রহ্মাদি জীবের আমি সবারে মোহিল।

purpose was to test your devotion—go on and prosper—but teach me a part of the gladness in your heart, purify me and help me to participate in the flood of divine love, so that I may resign myself to the force of the torrent which is too strong for me."

Such is the picture of a typical Bengal Vaisnav devotee of the 16th century.

Finally, before passing from this part of my subject, I venture to hazard the view that the Vaisnav theological literature does not seem to be altogether free from the drawbacks which are usually present in all such literature which records the experiences of apostles of a new evangel. In a remarkable passage speaking of the history of Evangelicalism and Methodism in the England of the 18th Century, Goldwin Smith, among other things, had occasion to observe—"no movement of the kind has ever been exempt from drawbacks and follies, from extravagance, exaggeration, breaches of good taste in religious matters, unctuousness and cant, from chimerical attempts to get rid of the flesh and live an angelic life on earth, from delusions about special providences and miracles, from the self-righteousness which fancies itself the object of a divine election." I fear what is true of Methodism in this regard is also true of Vaisnavism. I beg to refer in this connection to an interesting episode narrated in the Chaitanya-charitamrita of Krishnadas. The episode is significant, not merely from the present point of view, but also because it serves to illustrate how Buddhism was still living on in the land of its birth but was losing its hold over the public mind, and how the nascent ideals of the yet youthful and vigorous Vaisnavism were filling up the void left by the decadent Budhistic cult in the India of the 16th century.

একলা তোমারে আমি মোহিতে নারিল ॥
কৃষ্ণনাম উপদেশি কৃপাকর মোতে ॥
সব জীব প্রেমে ভাসে পৃথিবী হৈল ধন্যা ॥
চিত্ত মোর শুদ্ধ হৈল, চাহে কৃষ্ণনাম লৈতে।
চৈতন্যাবতার বহে প্রেমামৃত বন্যা।
এ বন্যায় যে না ভাসে, সেই জীব ছার।
কোটি কল্পে কভু তার নাহিক নিস্তার ॥

The substance of my episode* briefly stated is this. There came a Budhist teacher at the head of his followers, and he propounded all sorts of knotty abstruse questions which were successfully answered by the great apostle, Chaitanya. The Buddhists there-upon entered into a secret plot to bring about the undoing of the Vaisnavas by making them partake of unclean food. This food they placed on a metal dish which was being carried to the Vaisnavas, when a huge bird swooped upon it, and flew with it up in the air scattering the food in all directions. The dish fell on the head of the Budhist teacher with a terrific force, and in its fall inflicted a deep wound and stunned the teacher to the ground with the blow. The Budhists saw, as did the Vaisnavas, the hand of the true God in all this, and lost no time in embracing Vaisnavism. The teacher was only saved from death on his repeating *Krishna, Krishna.* He followed the example of his disciples and himself became a Vaisnav. Indeed they all saw the incarnation of the true God in Chaitanya himself before them. Thus on the present occasion Vaisnavism drew its recruits from the ranks of the dispirited followers of Budhism, and galvanised them into life and activity, filling them with a fresh spiritual ardour with its newborn energy and enthusiasm of self-renunciation.

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* তর্কপ্রধান বৌদ্ধশাস্ত্র নবমতে।
তর্কেই খণ্ডিল প্রভু না পারে স্থাপিতে।
বৌদ্ধাচার্য্য নব নব প্রশ্ন উঠাইল।
দৃঢ়যুক্তি তর্কে প্রভু খণ্ড খণ্ড কৈল॥
দার্শনিক পণ্ডিত সবায় পাই পরাজয়।
লোকে হাস্য করে বৌদ্ধ পাইল লজ্জাভয়॥
প্রভুকে বৈষ্ণব জানি বৌদ্ধ ঘর গেলা।
সর্ব্ব বৌদ্ধ মিলি তবে কুমন্ত্রণা কৈলা॥
অপবিত্র অন্ন এক থালিতে করিয়া।
প্রভু আগে আনিল বিষ্ণুপ্রসাদ বলিয়া॥
হেনকালে মহাকায় এক পক্ষী আইল।
ঠোঁটে করি থালি সহ অন্ন ল'য়া গেল॥
বৌদ্ধগণের উপর অন্ন পড়ে অমেধ্য হইয়া
বৌদ্ধাচার্য্যের মাথায় থালি পড়িল বাজিয়া॥
চেরছে পড়িল থালি মাথা কাটা গেল।
মূর্চ্ছিত হইয়া আচার্য্য ভূমিতে পড়িল॥
হাহাকার করি কান্দে সব শিষ্যগণ।
সবে আসি প্রভু পদে লইল শরণ॥
তুমিহ ঈশ্বর সাক্ষাৎ ক্ষম অপরাধ।
জীয়াহ আমার গুরু করহ প্রসাদ॥
প্রভু কহে সবে কহ কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ হরি।
গুরু কর্ণে কহ কৃষ্ণনাম উচ্চ করি॥
তোমা সবার গুরু তবে পাইবে চেতন।
সর্ব্ব বৌদ্ধ মিলি করে কৃষ্ণ-সঙ্কীর্ত্তন॥
গুরু কর্ণে কহে, কহ কৃষ্ণ রাম হরি।
চেতন পাইল আচার্য্য উঠে হরি বলি॥
কৃষ্ণ কহি আচার্য্য প্রভুকে করয়ে বিনয়।
দেখিয়া সকল লোক পাইল বিস্ময়॥
এইমত কৌতুক করি শচীর নন্দন।
অন্তর্দ্ধান কৈল কেহো না পায় দর্শন॥

I conclude this paper with a brief reference to a few texts which occur in the *Madhalila* of *Chaitanya Charitamrita*—texts which to my mind are full of meaning and whose significance I trust will be at once apparent to all students of history. The passages in question of course illustrate in the first place the intense enthusiasm which the sayings and the doings of Chaitanya excited in the country and how Vaisnavism found its recruits among all ranks in the society of the day. But they also show how Bengal in the time of Chaitanya was to all intents and purposes cut up into small principalities—the domain of a Hindu chief like Protaprudra bordering on that of a Mahomedan chieftain,* each domain being administered on different principles. This inference which I have ventured to draw from Vaisnav literature would seem to be borne out by *Feristha's* statement that Shere divided the kingdom of Bengal among a number of chiefs independent of one another and appointed Kafi Fazilet, a native of Kurrah, famous for his learning and policy to superintend the whole. These principalities had to be welded together to form a homogeneous kingdom. This was no doubt the task which the Mogul Emperor Akbar set before himself, and the passages under reference

* মদ্যপ যবনরাজের আগে অধিকার।
তার ভয়ে কেহ পথে নারে চলিবার ॥
পিছলদা পর্য্যন্ত সব তার অধিকার।
তার ভয়ে নদী কেহ হইতে নারে পার ॥
দিনকথো রহ সন্ধি করি তার সনে।
সুখেতে নৌকায় তোমা করবে গমনে ॥
হেনকালে সেই যবনের এক চর।
উড়িয়া কটকে আইল করি বেশান্তর ॥
প্রভুর অদ্ভুত সেই চরিত্র দেখিয়া।
হিন্দুচর কহে সেই যবন ঠাঞি গিয়া ॥
এক সন্ন্যাসী আইলা জগন্নাথ হৈতে।
অনেক সিদ্ধপুরুষ লোক হয় তার সাথে ॥
নিরন্তর সবে করে কৃষ্ণ-সঙ্কীর্ত্তন।
সবে হাসে গায় নাচে করয়ে ক্রন্দন ॥
লক্ষ লক্ষ লোক আসে দেখিতে তাহারে।
তাঁহা দেখি পুনরপি যাইতে নারে ঘরে ॥
সেই সব লোক হয় বাতুলের প্রায়।
কৃষ্ণ কহি নাচে কান্দে গড়াগড়ি যায় ॥
কহিবার কথা নহে দেখিলে সে জানি।
তাহার প্রভাবে তারে ঈশ্বর করি মানি ॥
এত কহি সেই চর 'হরি কৃষ্ণ' গায়।
হাসে কান্দে নাচে গায় বাতুলের প্রায়।
এত শুনি যবনের মন ফিরি গেল।
আপন বিশ্বাস উড়িয়া স্থানে পাঠাইল ॥
বিশ্বাস আসিয়া প্রভুর চরণ বন্দিল।
'কৃষ্ণ কৃষ্ণ' কহে প্রেমে বিহ্বল হইল ॥
ধৈর্য্য করি উড়িয়াকে কহে নমস্করি।
তোমার ঠাঞি পাঠাইল ম্লেচ্ছ অধিকারী ॥
তুমি যদি আজ্ঞা দেহ এখানে আসিয়া।
যবনাধিকারী যায় প্রভুরে দেখিয়া।
বহুত উৎকণ্ঠা তার করিয়াছে বিনয়।
তোমা সনে এই সন্ধি নাহি যুদ্ধ ভয় ॥
শুনি মহাপাত্র কহে হইয়া বিস্ময়।
মদ্যপ যবনের চিত্ত ঐছে কে করয় ॥
যদ্যপি বৃন্দাবন ত্যাগে প্রভুর নাহি মন।
ভক্তেচ্ছা করিতে কহে মধুর বচন ॥

illustrate the difficulties of the task.* An uniform system of administration can hardly he said to have existed, and this is evidenced by the difference in the feelings of the people towards the administrative authorities in their respective localities. Conservation of peace and protection of property must have been extremely difficult in certain parts of the country, for the land was troubled by pirates and জলদস্যু. In this matter the testimony of *Charitamrita* coincides with that of *Mukundram*, and it is clear that the river dacoity of which one hears a great deal even in our days has been one of the perennial difficulties of government in Bengal. How rampant the evils of Dacoity were in Bengal in the earlier decades of the 16th Century before Akbar's authority could be firmly establisbed may be seen from certain sections of the *Chaitanya Bhagabat* which I append.† Even in *Nabadwip* with its teeming population of scholars and traders, there were obviously organised bands of robbers under their regular leaders who did not scruple to use murderous, dangerous weapons like swords and lances, axes and spears, and who met and discussed and carefully planned their operations. These Dacoits were known to be such to their neighbours. They were a terror to all; yet none dared to interfere with them.

The second of my texts‡ narrates an episode which throws a

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* The grievous condition of the North-West of India during the latter years of Humayun's reign, the incesant risings and revolts of single vassals against the Central Government, the devastations wrought by continuous warfare—all this has been exhaustively described by the Turkish traveller Sidi Ali Reis. In the same manner the fortynine years' reign of Akbar the Glorious, undoubtedly the greatest of the Mogul Princes, was one incessant whirl of strife and insurrection, and the various reforms which he introduced in the Government, in the army, and in the legislation of the realm, inspite of all the existing confusion, necessarily bore a severely Asiatic stamp.

Prof. Vambery's Western Culture in Eastern Lands.

† *Vide* Note V.

‡ আচম্বিতে এক গোপ বাঁশী বাজাইল।
শুনিতেই মহাপ্রভুর প্রেমাবেশ হৈল॥
অচেতন হঞা প্রভু ভূমিতে পড়িলা।
মুখে ফেণ পড়ে নাসায় শ্বাসরুদ্ধ হৈলা॥
হেনকালে তাঁহা আসোয়ার দশ আইলা।
ম্লেচ্ছ পাঠান ঘোড়া হৈতে উতরিলা॥
প্রভুরে দেখিয়া ম্লেচ্ছ করয়ে বিচার।
এই যতি পাশে ছিল সুবর্ণ অপার॥
এই পঞ্চ বাটোয়ার ধুতরা খাওয়াইঞা।
মারি ডারিয়াছে যতির সব ধন লঞা॥
তবে পাঠান সেই পঞ্চজনেরে বান্ধিল।
কাটিতে চাহে গৌড়িয়া সব কাঁপিতে লাগিল॥

curious sidelight on the administration of justice and the methods in vogue for the protection of life and property in the land. *Chaitanya* is in one of his trances, surrounded by five of his followers, lying senseless on the ground, and foaming in the mouth. Suddenly there appear ten Pathan horsemen—Government officials, who immediately arrest the followers of Chaitanya suspecting them to be thugs who had drugged Chaitanya, and robbed him of all his possessions, and the Mussulman horsemen threaten to execute all the Vaisnavas summarily on the spot. The episode speaks for itself, and comment on the circumstantial details is needless. The last of my references states that Hussain Khan* was the Mahomedan ruler of Gaur at the time of Chaitanya and the passage speaks of the relation of Hussain Khan to his immediate Hindu predecessor and master and supplies an eloquent commentary on the then general attitude of the Mahomedans towards the Hindus of the day. In this connection the following rapid sketch of the fortunes of Bengal† given by Dow will help us to realise in some measure the place of the province in Akbar's Empire :—

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* পূর্ব্বে সুবুদ্ধিরায় ছিলা গৌড়-অধিকারী।
হুসেন খাঁ সৈয়দ করে তাহার চাকরি॥
দিঘী খোদাইতে তারে মনসীব কৈলা।
ছিদ্র পাঞা রায় তারে চাবুক মারিলা॥
পাছে যবে হুসেন খাঁ গৌড়ে রাজা হৈলা।
সুবুদ্ধি রায়েরে তেহো বহু বাড়াইলা॥
তার স্ত্রী তার অঙ্গে দেখে মারণের চিহ্ন।
সুবুদ্ধি রায়েরে মারিতে কহে রাজস্থানে॥
রাজা কহে আমার পোষ্টা রায় হয় পিতা।
ইহারে মারিব আমি ভাল নয় কথা॥
স্ত্রী কহে জাতি লহ, যদি প্রাণে না মারিবে।
রাজা কহে জাতি নিলে এহো নাহি জীবে॥
স্ত্রী মরিতে চাহে রাজা সঙ্কটে পড়িলা।
করোয়ার পাণি তার মুখে দেওয়াইলা॥
তবে সুবুদ্ধি রায় সেই ছদ্ম পাইয়া।
বারাণসী আইলা স্ববিষয় ছাড়িয়া॥
প্রায়শ্চিত্ত পুছিলেন পণ্ডিতের স্থানে।
তারা কহে তপ্তঘৃত খাঞা ছাড় প্রাণে॥

† Bengal is an extensive country, situated in the second clime. Its length is 450 *kos*, extending from Bundar Chātgām (the port of Chittagong) to Garhi, and its breadth, from the northern mountains to the province of Madaran (Midnapur), is 220 *kos*. Its revenue amounted to sixty *krors* of *dáms*. (One kror and fifty lacs of rupees—*Ikbal námá*.) In former times, its governors always maintained 8000 horse, one lac of foot soldiers, 1000 elephants, and 400 or 500 war boats. From the time of Sher Khán Afghán and his son Salim Khán, this country had remained in the possession of the Afgháns. When my revered father mounted and adorned the throne of Hindústán, he appointed an army to subdue it. Strenuous efforts to effect its conquest were for a long time maintained and at

After the downfall of the Afgans, Bengal, like many other provinces, started up into an independent kingdom, and was governed by successive dynasties of Rajas, who chiefly resided at the now deserted capital of Ghor. Under these princes, it continued a powerful and opulent kingdom, to the beginning of the thirteenth century, when it was first invaded by the Mahomedans, under a prince of the race of Chillagi, who possessed the countries near the source of the Oxus. The name of this Tartar invader was Eas-uldien; but he was soon after reduced to subjection by Altumsh, the Patan emperor of Delhi, who formed Bengal into a province, governed by a lieutenant, who derived his authority from the conqueror.

Bengal, during the dominion of the Patans in India, was frequently subject to revolution and change. When a prince of abilities sat on the throne of Delhi, it held of the empire; when the emperor was weak, it became an independent sovereignty under its governor. When the valour and conduct of Babar put an end to the government of the Patans at Delhi, some of that race remained untouched in Bengal. The misfortunes of Humaioon, in the beginning of his reign, not only prevented him from extending the conquests of his father, but deprived him even of the throne which Babar had acquired; and death followed too soon, upon his return, to permit him to reduce the wealthy kingdom of Bengal by his arms. The glory of this conquest was reserved for his son, the illustrious Akbar, who, by the expulsion of Daood, the last king of Bengal of the Pathan race, annexed it in the year 1574 to his empire. Viceroys from Delhi governed the kingdom, from that period, till the debility of Mahommed Shaw gave scope to the usurpation of Aliverdi; and now, by a wonderful revolution of fortune, the sovereigns of that distant province are created by the deputies of the East India Company.

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length it was wrested from the hands of Dáúd Kiránī, the last ruler of the country, who was killed, and his forces defeated and scattered by Khán Jahān.

From that time to the present the country has been governed by servants of the Empire, excepting only a remnant of Afgháns who remained in the recesses and on the borders of the country. By degrees these fell into trouble and distress, and the whole country was annexed to the Imperial dominions. When I ascended the throne, in the first year of my reign, I recalled Mán Singh, who had long been governor of the country, and appointed my *kokaltásh* Kutbu-d-din to succeed him. *Waki'AtmI Jahangiri.*

In this connection I would further place before you just a few beautiful words from a popular version of the fortunes of the Moguls in India which that gifted writer, Gabrielle Festing, placed in our hands last year. I refer to her "*When Kings rode to Delhi*," a book which Sir George Birdwood commends to our notice in such eloquent terms.

> Once upon a time there was a king who dreamed a dream.
>
> Sitting on the throne of Delhi, he looked out over Hindustan, and saw how marauders had despoiled it and parcelled it out among themselves, how chief warred with chief, and none was strong enough to bid them cease. He heard the complaints of the poor in time of war, slain, driven forth homeless, carried away captive, because the great men had quarrelled with one another, or in time of peace ground down into the dust, stripped bare, because the tax-gatherer extorted many times more than was due to put into his own pocket. He saw men persecuted and oppressed, shut out from all honourable employment because they held to the gods of their fathers, and he saw how the poor among them might not even worship in their holy places because they could not pay the tax upon pilgrimages imposed by their conquerors. He saw what the women endured—made to know the pangs of childbirth when they themselves were but children; bound living, to a husband's corpse on a funeral pyre, when the Brahmans lit the flames beneath them. Alien in race, his heart yearned over the land, as the hearts of many aliens have yearned since his day; and he dreamed a dream. He saw Hindustan at peace under the rule of a strong hand, men of every tongue and race and creed rising to honour and place in camp and court, or dwelling in security on the land and in the city, with no one to make them afraid. He saw the women, grown to full strength, the mothers of strong sons, who should all unite under the banners of the Empire to repel a common foe. He saw the multitude free to worship as they pleased, unhindered and unmulcted, so they kept the laws; and he saw the wise bowing before the One God who is not contained in temples made by hands, the Father of all men, the spirit who clothes Himself with this material universe as with a garment.
>
> It was a dream. Akbar himself knew that it would not last. Even in our own day, after three hundred and fifty years of progress, it has not been realised in full. Yet it is something to have seen it,—infinitely more to have made it come true, though only in

part and for a little while. "Akbar's dream" has become a byword among many of those who have the vaguest ideas as to when he lived or what he dreamed; comparatively few know how much he did to turn the dream into reality.

It was no time for dreams when Humayun tumbled headlong down the stone staircase. The Afghans were in possession of Bengal and the Ganges Valley, and an army from Bengal was advancing upon Agra and Delhi. The Moghul leaders were divided in their counsels, and the new Emperor was a boy of thirteen.

It is not the purpose of this discourse to enter into too many purely historical details, for as J. A. Symonds reminds us in one of his prefaces to his *Renaissance in Italy*, "The historian of culture sacrifices much that the historian of politics will judge essential, and calls attention to matters that the general reader may sometimes find superfluous," his main object being "to paint the portrait of national genius identical through all varieties of manifestation."

I should, however, like to recall to your mind two highly interesting pen-portraits to be found in the pages of the *Tabakati Akbari*, which throw light on the position of affairs in the Bengal of the 16th Century on the eve of the final establishment of Akbar's authority: one relating to the defeat of *Daud* by the imperial forces and the conclusion of a short-lived peace with him which was broken soon after by Daud, the other having reference to the transfer of the capital of Bengal from Tanda to Gaur and the death of the *Khan-khanan*.

After the conquest of Tanda and the flight of Daud to Orissa, *Khan-khanan* first devoted his attention to the settlement of the affairs of the country. Then he sent Raja *Todurmull* with some other *amirs* towards Orissa in pursuit of Daud who had taken refuge in *Katak Banaras* (Cuttack).

Daud had suffered several defeats in succession, and Gujar Khan, his mainstay and support, was slain. Death stared him in the face; so, in his despair and misery, he sent amessenger to Khan-khanan with a message to this effect: "The striving to crush a party of Musulmans is no noble work. I am ready to submit and become a subject; but I beg that a corner of this wide

country of Bengal sufficient for my support may be assigned to me. If this is granted, I will rest content, and never after rebel." The *amirs* communicated this to Khan-khanan, and after considerable discussion it was determined to accept the proposal, upon the condition that Daud himself should come out to meet Khan-khanan, and confirm the agreement by solemn binding oaths.

Next day Khan-khanan ordered a grand Court to be held, and all the nobles and attendants to be present in their places in fine array, and the troops drawn up in arms in front of the tents. Daud came out of the fort, attended by his Afghan nobles and officers, and proceeded to the tent of Khan-khanan. When he approached it, Khan-khanan, with great courtesy and respect, rose up and walked half-way down the tent to meet him. When they met, Daud loosened his sword from the belt, and holding it before him, said, "I am tired of war since it inflicts wounds on worthy men like you." Khan-khanan took the sword, and handed it to one of his attendants. Then gently taking Daud by the hand, he seated him by his side, and made the most kind and fatherly inquiries. Food and drink and sweetmeats were served, of which the Khan pressed him to partake.

After the dishes were removed, the terms of peace came under discussion. Daud protested that he would never take any course hostile to the Imperial throne, and he confirmed his promise by the most stringent oaths. The treaty of peace was drawn up, and then Khan-khanan brought a sword with a jewelled belt of great value out of his stores, and presenting it to Daud, said, "You have now become a subject of the Imperial throne, and you have promised to give it your support. I have therefore requested that the country of Orissa may be settled upon you for your support, and I feel assured that His Majesty will confirm my proposition—granting this to you as my *tankwah* has been granted to me. I now gird you afresh with this warlike sword." Then he bound on the sword with his own hands; and showing him every courtesy, and making him a great variety of gifts, he dismissed him. The Court then broke up, and Khan-khanan started on his return.

On the 10th Safar, 983, he reached Tanda the capital, and sent a report of his arrangements to the Emperor, who was greatly delighted and satisfied with the conquest of Bengal. Splendid robes and jewelled swords, and a horse with a golden saddle, were sent to Khan-khanan, and all the arrangements he had made were confirmed.

The following is the account of the death of Daud to be found in the *Akbarnama* of Abul Fazl.

When victory declared for the Imperial army, the weak-minded Dáúd was made prisoner. His horse stuck fast in the mud, and * * * a party of brave men seized him, and brought him prisoner to Khán-jahán. The khán said to him, "Where is the treaty you made, and the oath that you swore?" Throwing aside all shame, he said, "I made that treaty with Khán-khánán. If you will alight, we will have a little friendly talk together, and enter into another treaty." Khán-jahán, fully aware of the craft and perfidy of the traitor, ordered that his body should be immediately relieved from the weight of his rebellious head. He was accordingly decapi- tated, and his head was sent off express to the Emperor. His body was exposed on a gibbet at Tánda, the capital of that country.

Here is the account of the death of Khan-khanan Mu'nim Khan.

When Khan-khanan, with his mind at ease about Daud, returned to Tanda, the capital of the country, under the influence of his evil destiny, he took a dislike to Tanda, and crossing the Ganges, he founded a home for himself at the fortress of Gaur, which in old times had been the capital of Bengal, and he ordered that all the soldiers and *raiyats* should remove from Tanda to Gaur. In the height of the rains the people were involved in the trouble of expatriation. The air of Gaur is extremely unhealthy, and in former times, the many diseases which distressed its inhabitants induced the rulers to abandon the place, and raise the town of Tanda. Sickness of many kinds now broke out among the people, and every day numbers of men departed from Gaur to the grave, and bade farewell to relatives and friends. By degrees the pestilence reached to such a pitch that men were unable to bury the dead, and cast the corpses into the river. Every day the deaths of many *amirs* and officers were reported to Khan-khanan, but he took no warning, and made no resolution to change his residence. He was so great a man that no one had the courage to remove the cotton of heedlessness from his ears, and bring him to a sense of the actual position. His own health became affected, and he grew worse, and at the end of ten days, in the month of Safar, 983, he departed this life. His nobles and officers, who had so often met to congratulate him, now assembled to lament him.

With reference to what I stated in an earlier part of this discourse regarding Akbar's anxiety to grapple with the difficulties of social problems, I hope to place before you on a subsequent occasion the Emperor's ordinance about marriage. To-day I content myself with alluding to a record we have in the *Akbarnama* illustrative of Akbar's attitude towards the question of the immolation of widows.* We read—

> In the interior of Hindusthan it is the custom, when a husband dies, for his widow willingly and cheerfully to cast herself into the flames (of the funeral pile), although she may not have lived happily with him. Occasionally love of life holds her back, and then the husband's relations assemble, light the pile, and place her upon it, thinking that they thereby preserve the honour and character of the family. But since the country had come under the rule of his gracious Majesty, inspectors had been appointed in every city and district, who were to watch carefully over these two cases, to discriminate between them, and to prevent any woman being forcibly burnt. About this time, Jai Mal (son of Mal Deo), who had been sent with his forces to join the Amirs in Bengal, died of sunstroke in the vicinity of Chaunsa. His wife, the daughter of Muna Raja, was unwilling to burn; but her son Udi Singh, with a party of his bigoted friends, resolved upon the sacrifice. The matter came to the Emperor's knowedge, and his feeling of justice and humanity made him fear that if he sent messengers to stop the proceedings, some delay night occur, so he mounted his horse, and rode with all speed to the place. As the facts were not fully known, some of these men,

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* As to the burning of widows in Mogul India, attention may be invited to the following from *Bernier's Letter to M. Chapelain*, dated October 4th, 1667 :—

There are so many writers of voyages relating the custom of the Indian women, burning themselves with their husbands, that I think something at last will be believed of it. For my part I am going to take my turn also, and to write to you of it like others; yet in the meantime observing withal, that 'tis not true what is said of it, and that now they do not burn themselves in so great a number as formerly, because the Mahomedans, that bear sway at present in Indostan, are enemies to that barbarours custom, and hinder it as much as they can; not opposing it absolutely, because they are willing to leave their idolatrous people, who are far more numerous than themselves, in the free exercise of their religion, for fear of some revolt: But by indirectly preventing it, in that they oblige the women, ready to burn themselves, to go and ask permission of the respective governors, who send for them, make converse with their own women, remonstrate things to them with annexed promises, and never give them this permission, but after they have tried all these gentle

> in their thoughtlessness, were disposed to resist und make disturbances. * * But when His Majesty arrived, Jogganath and Rai Sal came forward to meet him, and brought the leader of these foolish men to him. He accepted their assurance of repentance, and only place dthem in confinement.*

The student of history would thus he excused if he quotes in connection with the work and achievements of Akbar, round whom centred the manysided activities of the Renaissance in the India of the 16th Century, and who was the living embodiment of the manyfold impulses of the period, Macaulay's admirably-worded estimate of the services of Lord William Bentinck which is inscribed at the foot of Bentinck's statue in this city :

He abolished cruel rites; he effaced humiliating distinctions; he gave liberty to the expression of public opinion; his constant study was to elevate the intellectual and moral character of the nations committed to his charge.

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ways, and till they find them fix'd in their sottish resolution. Which yet hinders not but that many burn themselves, especially those that live upon the lands of the Rajas, where no Mahomedan governors are.

* Twenty-eighth year of the reign. *Akbarnama.*

NOTE I.

The conclusions which I have ventured to draw from the narratives and episodes interspersed in Vaisnav literature regarding the political condition of Bengal in the earlier decades of the 16th Century may be placed by the side of the following from Stewart's pages:—

With Daood Khan terminated the line of Bengal kings, who had reigned in succession over that country for 236 years; and with him was brought to a conclusion the sovereignty of the Afghan nation over that province, of which they had held the uncontrolled possession for nearly four centuries.

The Government of the Afghans in Bengal cannot be said to have been monarchical, but nearly resembled the feudal system introduced by the Goths and Vandals iuto Europe. Bukthiyar Kheelijy and the succeeding conquerors made choice of a certain district as their own domain; the other districts were assigned to the inferior chiefs, who subdivided the lands amongst their petty commanders, each of whom maintained a certain number of soldiers, composed principally of their relations or dependants; these persons however did not cultivate the soil themselves, but each officer was the landlord of a small estate, having under him a certain number of Hindoo tenants, to whom, from the principle of self-interest, he conducted himself with justice and moderation: and had it not been for the frequent change of masters, and constant scenes of rebellion and invassion, in which private property was little regarded, the cultivators of the soil would have been placed in a state of comparative happiness; and agriculture would have flourished, as it subsequently did in another part of India under the government of their countrymen, the Rohillas.

The condition of the upper classes of Hindoos mnst, doubtless, have been much deteriorted; but it is probable that many of the Afghan officers, averse to business, or frequently called away from their homes to attend their chiefs, farmed out their estates to the opulent Hindoos, who were also permitted to retain the advantages of manufactures and commerce.

The authority of the Afghan kings of Bengal depended much upon their personal ability and conduct. We have seen them, on some occasions, acting as despotic sovereigns; at other times possessing little no on influence beyond the town or city in which they resided,.....often insulted, and even murdered by their menial servants.

NOTE II.

Sher Khan.

Students of history will always gratefully remember what is said of Sher Khan by Shaik Nurul Hak in *Zubdatu-t Tawarikh viz.*

Sher Khan made the road which now runs from Delhi to Agra by cutting through jungles, removing obstacles, and building sarais. Before that time, people had to travel through the Doab between those two places. There was so much security in travelling during his reign, that if a lone woman were to sleep in a desert with silver and gold about her person, no one would dare to commit theft upon her; and if it ever did so happen that any one lost any property, the mukaddams of the village which was the scene of the robbery were subject to fine, and for fear of its infliction, the zamindars used to patrol the roads at night.

Sher Khan founded many cities after his own name, as Sher-garh, Sher-kot and since old Delhi was far from the river Jumona, he demolished it and founded a new city on the banks of the river, which exists to this day. He founded also for its defence a broad wall, which through the absence of rebellion and the length of his reign, was brought to completion.

It is said once, when looking in a glass, he exclaimed, "Alas! that I have attained the empire only when I have reached old age, and when the time for evening prayer has arrived. Had it been otherwise, the world would have seen what I would have accomplished." Sometimes he would say, by way of showing what difficult and even impossible objects he contemplated, "I would have made a bridge to span the ocean, and have so contrived that even a widowed and helpless woman might without dlfficulty perform the pilgrimage to Mecca." To this day there exists a caravanserai of his building at Mecca, in which Afghan fakirs reside.

NOTE III.

Eighth year of the reign (of Akbar).

Remission of the Pilgrim Tax.

It was an old standing custom for the rulers of Hindustan to exact contributions, according to their respective means, from the pilgrims who visited the holy shrines. This tax was called *karmi*. His Majesty's judgment and equity condemned this exaction, and he remitted it, although it amounted to *krors* of rupees. An order was accordingly issued abolishing it throughout his dominions. * * * He was pleased to say that although this was a tax on the vain superstitions of the multitude, and the devotees did not pay it except when they travelled abroad, still the course they adopted was their mode of worshipping the Almighty, and the throwing of a stumbling-block and obstacle in their way could never be acceptable in the sight of God.

NOTE IV.

Ninth year of the Reign.

Remission of the Jizya.

One of the munificent acts of the Emperor at the beginning of this the ninth year of his reign was the remission of the *jizya* (poll-tax upon infidels), which, in a country so extensive as Hindustan, amounted to an immense sum.

Akbarnama.

NOTE V.

Adventures of a band of Dacoits—a plan that failed.

নবদ্বীপে বৈসে এক ব্রাহ্মণ কুমার।
তাহার সমান চোর দস্যু নাহি আর॥
যত চোর দস্যু—তার মহাসেনাপতি।
নাম সে ব্রাহ্মণ, অতি পরম কুমতি॥
পরবধে দয়ামাত্র নাহিক শরীরে।
নিরন্তর দস্যুগণ সংহতি বিহরে॥
নিত্যানন্দ স্বরূপের অঙ্গে অলঙ্কার।
সুবর্ণ প্রবাল মণি মুক্তা দিব্য হার॥
প্রভুর শ্রীঅঙ্গে দেখি বহুবিধ ধন।
হরিতে হইল দস্যু ব্রাহ্মণের মন॥
মায়া করি নিরবধি নিত্যানন্দ-সঙ্গে।
ভ্রময়ে তাহান ধন হরিবারে রঙ্গে॥
অন্তরে পরম দুষ্ট বিপ্র ভাল নয়।
জানিলেন নিত্যানন্দ অন্তর হৃদয়॥
হিরণ্য পণ্ডিত নামে এক সুব্রাহ্মণ।
সেই নবদ্বীপে বৈসে মহা-অকিঞ্চন॥
সেই ভাগ্যবন্তের মন্দিরে নিত্যানন্দ।
থাকিলা বিরলে প্রভু হইয়া অসঙ্গ॥
সেই দুষ্ট ব্রাহ্মণ—পরম দুষ্ট মতি।
লইয়া সকল দস্যু করয়ে যুকতি॥
"আরে ভাই! সভে আর কেন দুঃখ পাই।
চণ্ডী মায়ে নিধি মিলাইলা এক ঠাঁই॥
এই অবধূতের দেহেতে অলঙ্কার।
সোণা মুক্তা হীরা কসা বই নাই আর॥
কত লক্ষ টাকার পদার্থ নাহি জানি।
চণ্ডী মায়ে একঠাঞি মিলাইল আনি॥

শূন্য বাড়ী থাকে হিরণ্যের ঘরে।
কাঢ়িয়া আনিব এক দণ্ডের ভিতরে॥
ঢাল খাঁড়া লহ সভে হও সমবায়।
আজ গিয়া হানা দিব কথোক নিশায়॥
এইমত যুক্তি করি সব দস্যুগণ।
সভে নিশা ভাগ দেখি করিল গমন॥
খাঁড়া ছুরি ত্রিশূল লইয়া জনে জনে।
আসিয়া বেঢ়িল নিত্যানন্দ যেই স্থানে॥
একস্থানে রহিয়া সকল দস্যুগণ।
আগে চর পাঠাইয়া দিল একজন॥
নিত্যানন্দ মহাপ্রভু করেন ভোজন।
চতুর্দ্দিকে হরিনাম লয় ভক্তগণ॥
কৃষ্ণানন্দে মত্ত নিত্যানন্দ ভৃত্যগণ।
কেহো করে সিংহনাদ কেহো বা গর্জ্জন॥
ক্রন্দন করয়ে কেহো পরানন্দ রসে।
কেহো করতালি দিয়া অট্ট অট্ট হাসে॥
হৈ হৈ হায় হায় করে কোন জন।
কৃষ্ণানন্দে নিদ্রা নাহি সভেই চেতন॥
চর আসি ক হলেক দস্যুগণ স্থানে।
ভাত খায় অবধূত জাগে সর্ব্বজনে॥
দস্যুগণ বলে "সভে শুউক খাইয়া।
আমরাও বসি সভে হানা দিব গিয়া॥"
বসিল সকল দস্যু এক বৃক্ষ-তলে।
পরধন পাইবেক—এই কুতুহলে॥
কেহ বোলে "মোহোর সোণার তাড় বালা।"
কেহ বোলে "মুঞি নিমু মুকুতার মালা॥"
কেহ বোলে "মুঞি নিমু কর্ণ-আভরণ।"
"ছরি সব নিমু মুঞি" বোলে কোন জন॥
কেহ বোলে "মুঞি নিমু রূপার নূপুর।"
সভে এই মনকলা খায়ে ত প্রচুর॥
হেনই সময়ে নিত্যানন্দের ইচ্ছায়।
নিদ্রা ভগবতী আসি চাপিলা সভায়॥

সেইক্ষণ মহা ঘুমাইয়া দস্যুগণ।
সভেই হইল অতি মহা অচেতন॥
নিদ্রায় সকল দস্যু হইল মোহিত।
রাত্রি পোহাইল নাহিক সংবিত॥
কাক-রবে জাগিলেক সব দস্যুগণ।
রাত্রি নাহি দেখি সভে হৈল দুঃখী মন॥
আথেব্যথে ঢাল খাঁড়া ফেলাইয়া বনে।
সত্বরে চলিল সব দস্যু গঙ্গাস্নানে॥
শেষে সব দস্যুগণ নিজস্থানে গেল।
সভেই সভারে গালি পাড়িতে লাগিল॥
কেহো বোলে "তুই আগে পড়িলি শুইয়া।"
কেহো বোলে "তুই বড় আছিলি জাগিয়া॥"
দস্যু-সেনাপতি যে ব্রাহ্মণ দুরাচার।
সে বোলয়ে "কলহ করহ কেনে আর॥
যে হইল সে হইল চণ্ডীর ইচ্ছায়।
এক দিন গেলে কি সকল দিন যায়॥
বুঝিলাম চণ্ডী আসি মোহিলা আপনে।
বিনি চণ্ডী পূজিয়া গেলাঙ যে কারণে॥
ভাল করি আজি সবে মদ্য-মাংস দিয়া।
চল সভে একঠাঞি চণ্ডী পূজি গিয়া॥"
এতেক করিয়া যুক্তি সব দস্যুগণ।
মদ্য মাংস দিয়া সবে করিল পূজন॥
আরদিন দস্যুগণ কাচি নানা অস্ত্র।
আইলেন বীর-ছাঁদে পরি নীলবস্ত্র॥
মহানিশা সর্ব্বলোক আছয়ে শয়নে।
হেনই সময়ে বেঢ়িলেক দস্যুগণে॥
বাড়ীর নিকটে থাকি দস্যুগণ দেখে।
চতুর্দ্দিগে অনেক পাইকে বাড়ী রাখে॥
চতুর্দ্দিগে অস্ত্রধারী পদাতিকগণ।
নিরবধি হরিনাম করেন গ্রহণ॥
পরম প্রকাণ্ড মূর্ত্তি—সভেই উদ্দণ্ড।
নানা অস্ত্রধারী সভে—পরম প্রচণ্ড॥

সর্ব্ব দস্যুগণ দেখে তার একোজনে।
শতজনো মারিতে পারয়ে সেইক্ষণে॥
সভার গলায় মালা সর্ব্বাঙ্গে চন্দন।
সভারি বদনে নিরবধি সঙ্কীর্ত্তন॥
নিত্যানন্দ মহাপ্রভু আছেন শয়নে।
চতুর্দ্দিগে কৃষ্ণ গায় সেই সব জনে॥
দস্যুগণ দেখি বড় হইল বিস্মিত।
বাড়ী ছাড়ি লড়ি বসিলেন এক ভিত॥
সর্ব্ব দস্যুগণে যুক্তি লাগিল করিতে।
কোথাকার পদাতিক আইল এথাতে॥
কেহো বোলে "অবধূত কেমতে জানিয়া।
কাহার পাইক আনিঞাছয়ে চাহিয়া॥"
কেহো বোলে "ভাই অবধূত বড় জ্ঞানী।
মাঝে মাঝে অনেক লোকের মুখে শুনি॥
জ্ঞানবান্ বড় অবধূত মহাশয়।
আপনার রক্ষা কিবা আপনে করয়॥
অন্যথা যে সব দেখি পদাতিকগণ।
মনুষ্যের প্রায় ত না দেখি একজন॥
হেন বুঝি—এই সব শক্তির কারণে।
গোসাঞি করিয়া সভে বোলয়ে উহানে॥"
আরো কেহ বোলে "তুমি অবুধ যে ভাই।
যে খায় সে পরে সে বা কেমতে গোঁসাই॥"
সকল দস্যুর সেনাপতি যে ব্রাহ্মণ।
সে বোলয়ে জানিলাঙ সকল কারণ॥
যত বড় বড় লোক চারিদিগ হৈতে।
সভেই আইসে অবধূতেরে দেখিতে॥
কোন দিগ হৈতে কোন বিশ্বাস লস্কর।
আসিয়াছে, তার পদাতিক বহুতর॥
চল সভে আজি ঘরে যাই।
চাপে চুপে দিনদশ থাকি গিয়া ভাই!"
এত বলি সব দস্যুগণ গেল ঘরে।
অবধূত চন্দ্র প্রভু সচ্ছন্দে বিহরে॥

* * * *

আরবার যুক্তি করি পাপী দস্যুগণে।
আইলেক নিত্যানন্দ প্রভুর ভবনে॥
দৈবে সেই দিনে মহা মেঘে অন্ধকার।
মহাঘোর নিশা নাহি লোকের সঞ্চার॥
মহা ভয়ঙ্কর নিশা চোর দস্যুগণ।
দশ পাঁচ অস্ত্র একোজনের কাচন॥
প্রবিষ্ট হইল মাত্র বাড়ীর ভিতরে।
সভে হইল অন্ধ কেহো দেখিতে না পারে॥
কিছু নাহি দেখে, অন্ধ হৈল দস্যুগণ।
সভেই হইল হত-প্রাণ-বুদ্ধি-মন॥
কেহো গিয়া পড়ে গড়খাইর ভিতরে।
জোঁকে পোকে ডাঁশে তারে কামড়াইয়া মারে॥
উচ্ছিষ্ট গর্ত্তেতে কেহো কেহো গিয়া পড়ে।
তথায় মরয়ে বিছা পোকের কামড়ে॥
কেহো কেহো পড়ে গিয়া কাঁটার ভিতরে।
গায়ে পায়ে কাঁটা ফুটে নড়িতে না পারে॥
খালের ভিতরে গিয়া পড়ে কোন জন।
হাথ পাও ভাঙ্গি পড়ে করয়ে ক্রন্দন॥
সেই খানে কারো কারো গায়ে হৈল জ্বর।
সব দস্যুগণ চিন্তা পাইল অন্তর॥

Chaitanya Bhagabat. (*Anta khanda*)

NOTE VI.

Protaprudra's Patronage and Missionary enthusiasm.

বাহির আসি রাজা আজ্ঞা পত্রী লেখাইল।
নিজরাজ্যে বিষয়ী যত তারে পাঠাইল॥
গ্রামে গ্রামে নূতন আবাস করিবা।
পাঁচ সাত নব্য গৃহ সামগ্রী ভরিবা॥
আপনে প্রভু লঙা তাহা উত্তরিবা।
রাত্রি দিন বেত্র হস্তে সেবন করিবা॥
দুই মহাপাত্র হরিচন্দন মঙ্গরাজ।
তারে আজ্ঞা দিল রাজা কর সব কাজ॥
এক নব্য নৌকা রাখ আনি নদী তীরে।
যাঁহা প্রভু স্নান করি যাবে নদী পারে॥
তাঁহা স্তম্ভ রোপণ কর মহাতীর্থ করি।
নিত্য স্নান করি তাঁহা তাঁহা যেন মরি॥

Chaitanya Charitamrita.

III

MUKUNDRAM

AND

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, A.D. (I)

III

MUKUNDRAM

AND

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, A.D. (I)

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, AND FELLOW-STUDENTS :

I now come to another of my chief authorities and sources of information—*viz.* Mukundram. I do not, however, propose to speak of the literary excellences of his work on the present occasion, excellences which have not failed to attract the attention of European scholars, which fully entitle Mukundram to all that has been said of his poem by admiring readers, and for which he may be truly regarded as the Crabbe of Bengali Literature and the Chaucer of Indian story-tellers. Otherwise I might have spoken to you of the simplicity of his style, his realism, his genuine sincerity, his one aim being to say what he has to say in the truest possible way, without the slightest attention to literary finish, and hence also of his freedom throughout from that hard glitter which comes of the conscious attempt at literary elegance. I might have referred to that wonderful catalogue of flowers which the devoted worshipper gathers to lay at the feet of the deity he adores, the catalogue which inevitably reminds the student of English poetry of the catalogue of flowers in Milton's pages which the fancy of a devoted friend lays on the hearse of the departed companion of his youth, or of that earlier catalogue in Britania's Pastorals, or of that even earlier catalogue in Shakespeare's pages associated with the innocence of Perdita. I might have spoken of that which is the perfection of the poet's art, the evolution of the character of his hero, a mighty hunter, a veritable Nimrod in his youthful days, but who is raised to a higher plane of life, to the realisation of nobler and spiritual ideals of life, partly through the contemplation of the havoc which he himself wrought in the animal kingdom. But I feel

that I am not scholar enough to dwell on these aspects of the poem.

I have said that I am not scholar enough to speak of the literary merits of Mukundram's poetical work. For it would be a mistake to suppose that because he writes in Bengali, his work is intelligible to the average Bengali reader of our day. His Bengali stands to modern Bengali much in the same relation as Chaucer's English stands to modern English. Words from Persian and Arabic sources were being constantly added to the current vocabulary of his day. And his freedom in the use of the stock of words at his disposal was very much like the freedom of the author of the Fairie Queene. We may fittingly remember in this connection what Craik has said of Spenser, for our poet's archaisms and his mannerisms are not the only difficulties in the way of a correct understanding of his meaning. This is what we read of Spenser's truly lordly freedom. "His treatment of words is like nothing that ever was seen, unless it might be Hercules breaking the back of the Nemean lion. He gives them any shape and any sense that the case may demand. Sometimes he merely alters a letter or two. Sometimes he twists off the head or the tail of the unfortunate vocable altogether." Those who know Mukundram would at once recognise how Craik's words may be borrowed faithfully to characterise the Bengali poet's methods of composition.

And then the texts. The original poem was preserved in manuscripts, there being no printing presses in those days, and also used to be recited, like other poems belonging to the same category of religious poems, which went by the name of *Mangals*, by the class of bards whose business it was to give recitals of these. As a consequence, various readings crept in; pointless, purposeless emendations would perhaps be made whenever a particular passage was found unintelligible, and thus the original text would be corrupted in various ways. With the introduction of printing, some of these poems began

to be printed, and *Battolah*, which has been fittingly called the Grub Street of Calcutta, took the lead in this matter. Thus, though *Battolah* has come to be a synonym with us for cheap and nasty publications, it did a memorable work in the preservation of old productions of merit, a work which should be honorably mentioned and gratefully acknowledged by all who are interested in the development of Bengali Literature. But *Battolah* had little regard for careful editorial supervision, and while it preserved, it did not hesitate to introduce emendations of its own. Pundit Ramgati Nayaratna, author of an excellent treatise on the History of Bengali Literature for example, found a copy of our poet's work in the house of the descendants of the Raja under whose patronage the work was written, in which the readings of some of the important passages, such as that referring to Raja Man Sinha, differ from the readings to be found in the cheap popular editions.

The difficulties about the Texts and the pitfalls of unauthorised conjectural emendations make one think of all that is being done in England for the preservation and elucidation of ancient literary master-pieces under the supervision of scholars equipped with the necessary philological and historical knowledge. May we not hope that Bengal also may have her Chaucer Societies whose main function it would be, at times to rescue from oblivion, at times correctly to interpret to modern ear, those old treasures of art and letters in which is perhaps to be found India's real contribution to the elevation and development of human thought?

Mukundram's poem naturally divides itself into three parts. The first is the introduction, containing the usual invocations to the God of Success, etc., and a popular version of the Hindu conception of the creation of the Universe, from which the author skilfully glides into an account of the birth of the hero and the heroine of his poem, like as Chaucer makes the popular pilgrimage to Canterbury his starting-point

and the frame-work into which to fit his many-sided pictures of the various aspects of the national life of his day. The second part consists of the story of the mighty hunter, while the third gives us an account of the trials and experiences of one of those merchant adventurers who had their counterpart in Elizabethan England in the explorers of unknown lands and the discoverers of undreamt-of trade-routes.

The invocation to Chaitanya* startles us by its presence in a work which is avowedly written at the suggestion of a goddess, and which is therefore intended to popularise her worship. This is obviously a proof of the catholicity of Indian society which had already learnt by force of circumstances to harbour rival creeds within her bosom. It also shows the wonderful hold which the teachings of Chaitanya had gained over the public mind. Chaitanya, born in Nadia—completed his wanderings at Puri and ended his earthly mission in the thirties of the 16th Century—and yet our author, the exponent of a rival creed, speaks of the devotion of his companions and the enthusiasm of his many followers as of a quite recent and personal experience.

It has thus to be noted that the inferences regarding Chaitanya and the influence of his teachings to be drawn from Mukundram are precisely the inferences suggested by a study of the professed Vaisnava literature of the day.

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* অবনীতে অবতরি, চৈতন্য রূপেতে হরি
বন্দিব সন্ন্যাসী চূড়ামণি।
সঙ্গে সখা নিত্যানন্দ, ভুবনে আনন্দ-কন্দ,
মুকুতির দেখালে শরাণ॥
ভুবনে বিখ্যাত নাম, সুধন্য সুপুণ্য গ্রাম,
জম্বুদ্বীপ-সার নবদ্বীপ।
ঘোর কলি অন্ধকার, শ্রীচৈতন্য অবতার,
প্রকাশিল হরিনাম গীত॥
নদীয়া নগরে ঘর, ধন্য মিশ্র পুরন্দর,
ধন্য ধন্য শচী ঠাকুরাণী।
ত্রিভুবনে অবতংস, হইয়া মিহির-অংশ,
ত্রাণ কৈলা অখিল পরাণী॥
সুতপ্ত কাঞ্চন গৌর, ভুবন-লোচন-চোর
করঙ্গ কৌপীন দণ্ডধারী।
নয়নে গলয়ে লো'র, গলেতে ললাম ডোর,
সদাই বলেন হরি হরি॥
ভট্টাচার্য্য শিরোমণি, সার্ব্বভৌম সন্দীপনি,
ষড় ভুজ দেখি কৈল স্তুতি।
প্রেমভক্তি কল্পতরু, অখিল জীবের গুরু,
গুরু কৈলা কেশব ভারতী॥
কপট সন্ন্যাসি-বেশ, ভ্রমিলা অনেক দেশ,
সঙ্গে পারিষদ পুণ্যশালী
রামকৃষ্ণ গদাধর, গৌরী বাসু পুরন্দর
মুকুন্দ মুরারি বনমালী॥
কৃপাময় অবতার, কলিকালে কেবা আর,
পাষাণ দলনে দৃঢ়পণ।
জগাই মাধাই আদি, অশেষ পাপের নিধি,
হরিপদে দৃঢ় কৈল মন॥

At the threshold of the poem we are given an account of its origin, a statement of the circumstances under which it came to be written, a statement which arrests our attention from various points of view—not the least important of which are, in the first place the poet's conception of the source of his inspiration, and *secondly* the view which it opens up before us of the political, social and economic condition of Bengal in the latter half of the 16th Century. The following is an approximately literal rendering of the poet's account.† "Hear,

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অযোধ্যা মথুরা মায়া, যথা হরি পদ ছায়া,
কাশী কাঞ্চী অবন্তী দ্বারিকা।
ত্রিগর্ত্ত লাহোর দিল্লী, ভ্রমিলা অনেক পল্লী,
করি প্রভু মুক্তির সাধিকা॥
কয়াড় অম্বুজজাত, মহামিশ্র জগন্নাথ,
একভাবে পূজিল গোপাল।
বিনয়ে মাগিলা বর, জপি মন্ত্র দশাক্ষর,
মীন মাংস ত্যজি বহুকাল॥
শ্রীকবিকঙ্কণ গায়, বিকাইনু রাঙ্গাপায়
আজি মোর সফল জীবন।
গাইয়া তোমার আগে, গোবিন্দ-ভকতি মাগে,
চক্রবর্ত্তি শ্রীকবিকঙ্কণ॥

Mukundram.

† শুন ভাই সভাজন, কবিত্বের বিবরণ,
এই গীত হইল যেমতে।
উড়িয়া মায়ের বেশে, কবির শিয়র দেশে,
চণ্ডিকা বসিলা আচম্বিতে॥
সহর শিলিমাবাজ, তাহাতে গুজন রাজ,
নিবসে নিয়োগী গোপীনাথ।
তাঁহার তালুকে বসি, দামুন্যায় চাষ চষি,
নিবাস পুরুষ ছয় সাত॥
ধন্য রাজা মানসিংহ, বিষ্ণু পদাম্বুজ-ভৃঙ্গ,
গৌড়-বঙ্গ-উৎকল-অধিপ।
সে মানসিংহের কালে, প্রজার পাপের ফলে,
ডিহিদার মামুদ সরিপ॥
উজীর হলো রায়জাদা, বেপারিরে দেয় খেদা,
ব্রাহ্মণ বৈষ্ণবের হল অরি।
মাপে কোণে দিয়ে দড়া, পোনের কাঠায় কুড়া,
নাহি মানে প্রজার গোহারি॥
সরকার হৈল কাল, খিলভূমি লিখে মাল,
বিনা উপকারে খায় খতি।
পোদ্দার হইল যম, টাকা আড়াই আনা কম,
পাই লভ্য লয় দি- প্রতি॥
ডিহিদার অবোধ খোজ, টাকা দিলে নাহি রোজ,
ধান্য গরু কেহ নাহি কেনে।
প্রভু গোপীনাথ নন্দী, বিপাকে হইল বন্দী,
হেতু কিছু নাহি পরিত্রাণে॥
পেয়াদা সভার নাছে, প্রজারা পলায় পাছে
দুয়ার জুড়িয়া দেয় থানা।
প্রজারা ব্যাকুল চিত্ত, বেচে ধান্য গরু নিত্য,
টাকার দ্রব্য হয় দশ আনা॥
সহায় শ্রীমণ্ড খাঁ, চণ্ডীবাটী যার গাঁ,
যুক্তি কৈল গরিব খাঁর সনে।
দামুন্যা ছাড়িয়া যাই, সঙ্গে রামানন্দ ভাই
পথে চণ্ডী দিলে দরশনে॥
ভাই নহে উপযুক্ত, রূপরায় নিল বিত্ত,
যদুকুণ্ড তেলি কৈল রক্ষা।
দিয়া আপনার ঘর, নিবারণ কৈল ডর,
তিন দিবসের দিল ভিক্ষা॥
বাহিয়া গোড়াই নদী, সর্ব্বদা স্মরিয়া বিধি,
তেউট্যায় হনু উপনীত।
দারুকেশ্বর তরি, পাইল বাতনগিরি,
গঙ্গাদাস বহু কৈল হিত॥
নারায়ণ পরাশর, ছাড়িলাম দামোদর,
উপনীত কুচুট নগরে।
তৈল বিনা করি স্নান, উদক করিনু পান,
শিশু কান্দে ওদনের তরে॥
আশ্রয়ি পুকুর আড়া, নৈবেদ্য শালুকনাড়া,
পূজা কৈনু কুমুদ প্রসূনে।
ক্ষুধা ভয় পরিশ্রমে, নিদ্রা গেনু সেইধামে,
চণ্ডী দেখা দিলেন স্বপনে॥

assembled people all, how the poem originated." It was on a sudden that the goddess Chandi, descending from on high, sat by the head of the sleeping poet, assuming the form of his mother. There lived in the township of Selimabad, Neogy Gopinath, an honest Raja. We lived and tilled lands in Dhamania, in his taluk, for six or seven generations. All praise to Raja Man Sinha, the bee to the lotus foot of Vishnu, King of Gour, Banga and Utkal! During the reign of the above Man Sinha, on account of the sins of the people, Muhammad Sharif got the Khillat; Raijada became his minister; the merchants and traders became alarmed, and the *regime* became the foe of Brahmins and Vaisnavas. They measured lands, by placing ropes on the angular sides of fields, and they measured 15 *cottahs* to a *bigha*. They disregarded the cries of the rayats. They came to be the death of many people, and they entered unculturable lands as culturable. They exacted compensation, without conferring any corresponding benefit. The *poddars* became *Jam* (death). For every rupee they gave you $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas less, while they took for themselves as interest one pie per day per rupee.

"A *Khoja*, who, in his angry mood, paid no sort of regard to the poverty of the people, became *Dihidar* (village official). His anger could only be appeased by presents of rupees, but there was nobody to buy your cow and paddy. Our lord,

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করিয়া পরমদয়া, দিয়া চরণের ছায়া,
আজ্ঞা দিল করিতে সঙ্গীত।
করে লয়ে পত্র মসী, আপান কমলে বসি,
নানা ছন্দে লিখিলা কবিত্ব॥
চণ্ডীর আদেশ পাই, শিলাই বাহিয়া যাই,
আড়ারা নগরে উপনীত।
যেই মন্ত্র দিল দীক্ষা, সেই মন্ত্র করি শিক্ষা,
মহামন্ত্র জপি নিত্য নিত্য॥
আড়ারা বাহ্মণ ভূমি, বাহ্মণ যাহার স্বামী,
নরপতি ব্যাসের সমান।
পড়িয়া কবিত্ব বাণী, সভাষিত্ব নৃপমণি,
রাজা দিল দশ কাড়া ধান॥

সুধন্য বাঁকুড়া রায়, ভাঙ্গিল সকল দায়,
সুত পাশে কৈল নিয়োজিত।
তার সুত রঘুনাথ, রূপে গুণে অবদাত,
গুরু করি করিল পূজিত॥
সঙ্গে দামোদর নন্দী, যে জানে স্বপ্নের সন্ধি,
অনুদিন করিত যতন।
নিত্য দেন অনুমতি, রঘুনাথ নরপতি,
গায়নেরে দিলেন ভূষণ॥
ধন্য রাজা রঘুনাথ, কুলে শীলে অবদাত,
প্রকাশিল নূতন মঙ্গল।
তাঁহার আদেশ পান, শ্রীকবি কঙ্কন গান,
সম ভাষা করিয়া কুশল॥

Mukundram.

Gopinath Neogy, by an accident, came to be arrested, and there were no means for his release. *Peadas* were all about, for fear the rayats should abscond, and kept guard at every man's door. The rayats were sore of heart. They sold their stock of rice, paddy and cows from day to day and articles worth a rupee sold for ten annas. Srimant Khan, of Chandighur, was of help to me, and, taking counsel with Gambhir Khan, I left Dhamania; Ramanand Bhye accompanied me, having met me on the way. We reached Telegawa. Rupare assisted me, and Jadu Kundu Teli protected us. He gave us his own house to live in, allayed our fears, and gave us alms which sufficed for three days. Descending the river Garain with the stream, with our minds fixed on Providence, we arrived at my maternal uncle's house, and Gangadhur conferred on us many favours.

"Leaving Narain, Parasar and Amodar, we arrived at Gokra. My bath was without oil, water only was my drink and food, and my infant child cried for hunger. Sheltering myself under the raised bank of a tank, and with offerings of *Shallook* (roots of the water lily), I offered my *pujah* to the mother of Kumud. Overpowered by hunger, fear and fatigue, I fell asleep, when Chandi appeared to me in a dream. She was all gracious, and offering me the shelter of her feet, she bade me compose this song.

"Leaving Gokhra, accompanied by Ramanand Bhye we arrived at Arrha.

"Arrha is Brahmin-land, and a Brahmin is its lord, as wise as Vyas. I addressed this lord of men in poetic stanzas, and he gave me ten *arrahs* of paddy. Son of the brave Madhav, he, Bankura Dev, possessed of all virtues, employed me thenceforth as a tutor to his boy. The boy Raghunath, unequalled in beauty of mind and body, accepted me as his *guru* (tutor).

"I learnt the *mantra*, which she (Goddess Chandi) inspired me with, and I long meditated on this *Maha-Mantra*. Then

I took the leaf and the ink, and she (Goddess Chandi), sitting on my reed pen, caused poetry to be written by me in different kinds of stanzas. Ramanand was my companion. He knew all about my dream, and always took the greatest care of me.

"By order of Raghunath, lord of men, the songster who has got his dress and ornaments, daily rehearses the song—Praise be to Raja Raghunath, who has no equal in caste-dignity, and who is unrivalled in courtesy of demeanour! By his order Sri Kavi Kankan sings, and a new religious poem (*Mangal*) receives publicity."

It will at once be seen that this short account is full of interest for the modern reader. But I propose to dwell on only a few of the noticeable points, strictly from the historical point of view.

1. As to the poet's dream, the parallel case of Cædmon is perhaps too obvious a suggestion, yet the coincidence is so close and curious that the two may be placed side by side. The following is the version to be found in the pages of Stopford Brooke:—

> Cædmon was a servant to the monastery of Hild, an abbess of royal blood, at Whitby in Yorkshire. He was somewhat aged when the gift of song came to him, and he knew nothing of the art of verse, so that at the feasts when for the sake of mirth all sang in turn he left the table. One night, having done so and gone to the stables, for he had care of the cattle, he fell asleep, and One came to him in vision and said, "Cædmon, sing me some song." And he answered, "I cannot sing; for this cause I left the feast and came hither." Then said the other, "However, you shall sing." "What shall I sing?" he replied. "Sing the beginning of created things," answered the other. Whereupon he began to sing verses to the praise of God, and, awaking, remembered what he had sung, and added more in verse worthy of God. In the morning he came to the steward, and told him of the gift he had received, and, being brought to Hild, was ordered to tell his dream before learned men, that they might give judgment whence his verses came. And when they had heard, they all said that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by our Lord.

May I be forgiven a reference to a less known instance in this connection, in as much as these parallel cases with their celestial visions have a special significance and a deeper meaning than appears on the surface when we try to explain and understand the phenomenon of the origin and composition of religious poems in all climes and in all ages? The same phenomenon which meets us in England in Anglo-Saxon as also in Norman times repeats itself in the India of the 16th Century.

Just as the winsome spirit of legend casts a glamour over the first composition of religious verse in Anglo-Saxon times, so it seems to hover over its new birth five hundred years later, when it revisits for a moment the scenes of past achievements. Again a man of lowly origin was inspired by a heavenly vision to sing in praise of God. The story of St. Godric, like that of Cædmon, deserves to be held in memory.

Of him it is related that one day, when the sun was shining bright in the heavens, he lay bowed in earnest prayer before the altar of the Virgin, when all at once Our Lady appeared to him, accompanied by Mary Magdalen, both, very beautiful, with raiment shining white, in figure not large, resembling maidens of tender years. The petitioner was possessed by joy, but dared not move. Soon, however, the two drew near with slow steps, and Our Lady spoke.

"We will," said she, "protect thee to the end of the world, and seek to support thee in every need." Godric threw himself at her feet, and confided himself to her care. Thereupon the holy ones laid their hands on his head and stroked the hair from his temples, and the whole place was filled with sweet fragrance. Next the mother of mercy taught him a new song, which she sang before him as before a pupil, and he sang it after her and remembered it all the days of his life. When he had the text and melody fast in his mind, she bade him, as often as pains plagued him, or temptation, or vexation threatened to overcome him to sing the same, giving him this assurance. "From now on, if thou wilt call on me with this prayer, thou shalt have me at once as a propitious helper." Then, after making repeatedly over his head the sign of the cross, she and her companion vanished, leaving behind them the most wonderful fragrance. This tale, with tears flowing from his eyes, Godric more than once related

to Reginald, monk of Durham, by whom it was recorded, together with the text of the song, as follows.

"St. Mary, Virgin, mother of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, receive, shield, help thy Godric; embrace and bring him aloft with thee into the Kingdom of God.—St. Mary, Christ's abode, pearl (cleanness) of maidens, flower of mothers, remove my sin, rule in my mind, aid me to reach to God Himself."

2. Man Sinha came to the Eastern Province in the 32nd year of Akbar's reign, and did not leave these parts till the 44th year—when as we know from the *Aini-Akbary* he was ordered by the Emperor to join the forces in the Deccan. He came back, however, after a very short interval on the death of his son Jagat Sinha and in consequence of the disturbances caused by the Afgans. He did not leave the Subah till the third year of Jahangir's reign. We may thus safely say that our poem contains a picture of Bengal in the 16th Century of the Christian Era. There is a slight piece of internal evidence* in the work which lends colour to the suggestion that the main body of the poem was composed at an earlier date than the Introductory Section which refers to Man Sinha. That however does not affect our general conclusion that in the poem we have a picture of Bengal in the 16th Century, A.D.

3. Our poet probably lived on a piece of rent-free land under a Hindu Zemindar, or paid a nominal quit rent. As a consequence of the Toder Mull Settlement which we learn from the *Aini-Akbary* was introduced into Bengal between 1575-1583, his holding was remeasured, waste lands were entered as arable and culturable and hence assessable, and a higher rent was demanded of him. He had thus to leave his ancestral holding where the family had lived happily for generations. We can well understand the bitterness of the poet's heart on

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* "শাকে রস রস বেদ শশাঙ্ক গণিতা।
সেইকালে দিলা গীত হরের বণিতা॥"

the occasion. But while describing this, he speaks feelingly of the brotherly help which he received from his neighbours in his difficulty. This calls up a pleasing picture of the friendliness which in those days animated the villagers in their dealings with one another. It is permissible to an Indian to remark that this same spirit continues to be a marked characteristic of Indian society down to the present day. The present relief operations in the flooded districts of Bengal would seem to lend a special point to this reflection. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to suggest that this is an inheritance from our primitive past, in as much as it is found to be a characteristic common to the whole family of Indo-European nations.

4. The poet's picture does not perhaps justify us in concluding that there was any general mal-administration in the Subah under Man Sinha. Individual cases of hardship there must have been, individual tyrannical landlords there must always be. But what happened to him may have been the result of a too strict application of the rules of the new Todar Mull Settlement, which, among other things, provided for the depreciation of the current coin and sanctioned an elaborate system of *Batta*. Indeed, what the poet himself tells us of the help extended to him by his well-to-do neighbours and the patronage and protection he received from a neighbouring Raja, can hardly be consistent with any theory of general mal-administration in the Province. The poet's statement that the Poddars became *Jam* (death) need not therefore be interpreted too literally. There is, however, ample food for reflection in this picture—specially if we place it by the side of *Akbar's* lofty ideals and his truly statesmanlike declarations of humane principles of government. The following is the ideal sketched out for the Collector of Revenue in the pages of the *Aini-Akbari*. The Collector of the Revenue

> should be a friend of the agriculturist. Zeal and truthfulness should be his rule of conduct. He should consider himself the represen-

tative of the lord paramount and establish himself where every one may have easy access to him without the intervention of a mediator.

He should not cease from punishing highway robbers, murderers and evildoers, nor from heavily mulcting them, and so administer that the cry of complaint shall be stilled. He should assist the needy husbandman with advances of money and recover them gradually. And when through the exertions of the village headman the full rental is received, he should allow him half a *biswah* on each *bighah* or otherwise reward him according to the measure of his services. He should ascertain the extent of the soil in cultivation and weigh each several portion in the scales of personal observation and be acquainted with its quality. The agricultural value of land varies in different districts and certain soils are adapted to certain crops. He should deal differently, therefore, with each agriculturist and take his case into consideration. He should take into account with discrimination the engagements of former collectors and remedy the procedure of ignorance or dishonesty. He should strive to bring waste lands into cultivation and take heed that what is in cultivation fall not waste. He should stimulate the increase of valuable produce and remit somewhat of the assessment with a view to its augmentation. And if the husbandman cultivate less and urge a plausible excuse, let him not accept it. Should there be no waste land in a village and a husbandman be capable of adding to his cultivation, he should allow him land in some other village. He should be just and provident in his measurements. Let him increase the facilities of the husbandman year by year.

He should not entrust the appraisement to the headman of the village lest it give rise to remissness and incompetence and undue authority be conferred on high-handed oppressors, but he should deal with each husbandman, present his demand, and separately and civilly receive his dues.

He should collect the revenue in an amicable manner and extend not the hand of demand out of season.

5. While it is true that there was no general maladministration in the Subah during the rule of Man Sinha, we must admit that we come to a very different state of things later on.

In this connection it is instructive to note one of the *Institutes* or Regulations* of Jahangir, and the eloquent commentary appended to it by Sir Henry Elliot.

"I ordered," declares Jahangir, "that the officers of Government and Jagirdars should not forcibly seize possession of the lands of my subjects, and cultivate them for their own benefit."

Here is the commentary.

"The administration of the country had rapidly declined since Akbar's time.† The governments were farmed, and the governors exacting and tyrannical."

"The edict of his father, enjoining the observance of kindness and conciliation towards the cultivators, goes much further than this."

"Bengal, Gujarat, and the Deccan, are likewise full of rebels, so that no one can travel in safety for out-laws: all occasioned by the barbarity of the government, and the cruel exactions made upon the husbandmen, which drive them to rebellion."

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* *c. f. Memoirs of Jahangir* (Oriental Translation Fund—New Series) P. 9.

† The land-tax has always been the principal source from which Oriental potentates have derived their revenues. For all practical purposes it may be said that the system which they have adopted has generally been to take as much from the cultivators as they could get. Reformers, such as the Emperor Akbar, have at times endeavoured to introduce more enlightened methods of taxation, and to carry into practice the theories upon which the fiscal system in all Moslem countries is based. Those theories are by no means so objectionable as is often supposed. But the reforms which some few capable rulers attempted to introduce have almost always crumbled away under the regime of their successors.

If, from drought or other causes, the cultivator raises no crop, he is not required to pay any land-tax. The idea of expropriation for the non-payment of taxes is purely Western and modern. Under Roman Law, it was the rule in contracts for rent that a tenant was not bound to pay if any *vis major* prevented him from reaping. The European system is very different. A far less heavy demand is made on the cultivator, but he is, at all events in principle and sometimes in practice, called upon to meet it in good and bad years alike. He is expected to save in years of plenty in order to make good the deficit in lean years. If he is unable to pay, he is liable to be expropriated, and he often is expropriated. This plan is just, logical, and very Western. It may be questioned whether Oriental cultivators do not sometimes rather prefer the oppression and elasticity of the Eastern to the justice and rigidity of the Western system. *Cromer* on *The Government of Subject races.*

"But this observation may serve universally for the whole of this country, that ruin and devastation operates every where for since the property of all has become vested in the King, no person takes care of anything; so that in every place the spoil and devastations of war appear, and nowhere is anything repaired."

"For, all the great men live by farming the several governments, in which they all practise every kind of tyranny against the natives under their jurisdiction, oppressing them with continual exactions."

Sir John Shore in a memorable minute which forms an appendix to what is known as the Fifth Report frankly admits that the principles of Mogul taxation, as far as we can collect from the institutes of Timor and Akbar, from the ordinations of the emperors, and the conduct of their delegates, however limited in practice, were calculated to give the sovereign a proportion of the advantages arising from extended cultivation and increased population. As these were discovered, the *tumar* or standard assessment was augmented;* and whatever the justice or policy of the principle might be, the practice in detail has this merit, that it was founded upon a knowledge of real and existing resources.

Referring however to the measures of Jaffer Khan, Sir John notes—"the Zemindars, with few if any exceptions, were dispossessed of all management in the collections, and his own officers were employed to scrutinize the lands and their produce. The severities inflicted upon renters in arrears, and upon the Zemindars to compel them to a discovery of their resources,

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* *c. f. The* Roman *Indiction.*

"This was the name given to the system under which the taxable value of the land throughout the Empire was reassessed every fifteen years." At each reassessment, says, Mr. Hodgkin, the author of *Italy and her Invaders*, "the few who had prospered found themselves assessed on the higher value which their lands had acquired, while the many who were sinking down into poverty obtained, it is to be feared, but little relief from taxation on account of the higher rate which was charged to all."

were disgraceful to humanity ; and, as if personal indignities and tortures were not sufficient, the grossest insults were offered to the religion of the people. Pits filled with ordure and all impurities, were used as prisons for the Zemindars, and these were dignified with the appellation of Bykont, the Hindoo Paradise."

6. In reference to the experience of Gopinath who was imprisoned obviously for nonpayment of revenue, we have therefore to think of the powers which the revenue collector exercised in those days. He was vested with a large share of the powers of Government. As James Mill puts it for us, "He was allowed the use of a military force,—the police of the district was placed in his hands, and he was vested with the civil branch of judicature."

Here again Vaiṣṇab literature helps us to understand the existing state of things. The Ninth Canto of the *Antalila* of *Chaitanya Charitamrita* which speaks of the release of Gopinath Patyanayak throws a lurid light on the methods in vogue in those days for the realisation of Government dues from defaulters. Gopinath* had proved a defaulter—He

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* একদিন লোক আসি প্রভুরে নিবেদিল।
গোপীনাথকে বড়জানা চাঙ্গে চঢ়াইল ॥
তলে খড়্গ পাতি তার উপরে ডারি দিবে।
প্রভু রক্ষা করেন যবে, তবে নিস্তারিবে ॥
সবংশে তোমার সেবক ভবানন্দ রায়।
তার পুত্র তোমার সেবক রাখিতে জুয়ায় ॥
প্রভু কহে রাজা কেনে করয়ে তাড়ন ?
তবে সেই লোক কহে সব বিবরণ ॥
সর্ব্বকাল হয় তেঁহো রাজবিষয়ী।
গোপীনাথ পট্টনায়ক রামরায়ের ভাই ॥
মালজাঠা দণ্ডপাটে তাঁর অধিকার।
সাধি পাড়ি আনি দ্রব্য দিল রাজদ্বার ॥
দুইলক্ষ কাহন তাঁর ঠাঁই বাকী হৈল।
দুইলক্ষ কাহন তাঁরে রাজাত মাগিল ॥
তেঁহো কহে স্থূল দ্রব্য নাহি, যে গণিয়া দিব।
ক্রমে ক্রমে বিকি-কিনি দ্রব্য ভরিব ॥
ঘোড়া দশ বার হয় লেহ মূল্য করি।
এত বলি ঘোড়া আনি রাজদ্বারে ধরি ॥
এক রাজপুত্র ঘোড়ার মূল্য ভাল জানে।
তারে পাঠাইল রাজা পাত্রমিত্র সনে ॥
সেই রাজপুত্র মূল্য করে ঘটাইয়া।
গোপীনাথের ক্রোধ হৈল মূল্য শুনিয়া ॥
সেই রাজপুত্রের স্বভাব গ্রীবা ফিরায়।
উচ্চমুখে বারবাং ইতি উতি চায় ॥
তারে 'নন্দা করি কহে সগর্ব্ব বচনে।
রাজা কৃপা করে, তাতে ভয় নাহি মানে ॥
আমার ঘোড়া গ্রীবা না ফিরায়, উর্দ্ধে নাহি চায়
তাতে ঘোড়ার ঘাটি মূল্য করিতে না জুয়ায় ॥
শুনি রাজপুত্র-মনে ক্রোধ উপজিল।
রাজার ঠাঁই যাই বহু লাগানি করিল ॥
কৌড়ি নাহি দিবে এই বেড়ায় ছদ্ম করি।
আজ্ঞা দেহ যদি, চাঙ্গে চঢ়াই ইল কৌড়ি ॥
রাজা বোলে যেই ভাল সেই কর যায়।
যে উপায়ে কৌড়ি পাই, কর সে উপায় ॥
রাজপুত্র আসি তবে চাঙ্গে চঢ়াইল।
খড়্গ-উপর ফেলাইতে তলে খড়্গ পাতিল ॥

piteously begged for time, and prayed to be allowed to pay off by instalments. He offered to sell off his horses and things. But all to no purpose. He was placed on a *chang* with a sword hanging over him and a sword beneath. This was the usual fate of defaulters who had failed to pay Government dues, and this is how royal dues were realised.

Then again there is Ramchandra Khan of Benapul whom we have already noticed in connection with the experiences of Haridas.

Ramchandra Khan† was remiss in paying the Government dues, upon which the Mahomedan Wazir came to the village, bound him, his wife and children hand and foot, and looted the village for three days. After that he took away Ramchandra and his family with him as prisoners. In consequence the village remained a waste for a long time. In this case however, the landlord in question seems to have been a tyrannical person and apparently met with condign punishment, though unfortunately the innocent ryots suffered along with him. I should add that it is just possible that Ramchandra Khan is painted in Vaisnava Literature in darker colours than he deserves because of his hostility towards Haridas, for on the Jessore side there are still living traditions of Ramchandra Khan's beneficent actions towards his tenantry.

শুনি প্রভু কহে কিছু করি প্রণয় রোষ।
রাজকৌড়ি দিবার নহে, রাজার কি দোষ ?॥
রাজার বিলাত সাধি খায়, নাহি রাজ ভয়।
দারী-নাটুয়াকে দিয়া করে নানা ব্যয়॥
যেই চতুর সেই করুক-রাজ বিষয়।
রাজদ্রব্য শোধি পায় তাহা করে ব্যয়॥

হেনকালে আর লোক আইল ধাইয়া।
বাণী-না খাদি সবংশে লৈগেল বান্ধিয়া॥
প্রভু কহে রাজা আপন লেখার দ্রব্য লৈব।
আমি বিরক্ত সন্ন্যাসী, তাহে কি করিব ?

† দস্যুবৃত্তি করে রামচন্দ্র, না দেয় রাজকর।
ক্রুদ্ধ হঞা ম্লেচ্ছ উজীর আইল তার ঘর॥
আসি সেই দুর্গামণ্ডপে বাসা কৈল।
অবধ্য বধ করি মাংস সে ঘরে রান্ধাইল॥
স্ত্রী-পুত্র সহিতে রামচন্দ্রেরে বান্ধিয়া।
তার ঘর গ্রাম লুটে তিনদিন রহিয়া॥

সেই ঘরে তিনদিন করে অমেধ্য-রন্ধন।
আরদিন সবা লঞা করিল গমন॥
জাতি-ধন-জন খানের সব নষ্ট হৈল।
বহুদিন পর্য্যন্ত গ্রাম উজাড় রহিল॥

7. What about the Poddar that our poet speaks of ? In the poem he evidently appears in a twofold capacity—*firstly* as the receiver of Government dues giving $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas less for every Rupee and *secondly* as the Village money lender charging an interest of one pie per day on every Rupee.* As to the name itself it is interesting to note the following :—

> The Treasurer is called in the language of the day *Fotadar*. "The term Fota is applied in Arabic to cloths used as waist wrappers brought from Sind, and the word itself is supposed to be derived from that country, and not to be of Arabic origin. The office was no doubt originally named from the distinguishing portion of apparel—In Marathi, it is termed *potdar* whence the common name *Podar* applied to a banker, a cash keeper, or an officer in public establishments for weighing money or bullion." (Wilson's Glossary).

8. For the elucidation of the landrevenue system of the poet's day we have in the first place to go to the pages of the *Aini-Akbari*, and to the Mahomedan Historians of India as they are condensed and presented in Elliot's collection, but we should also refer to the materials collected by the Committee of the House of Commons which enquired into the affairs of the East India Company in 1810. Speaking of Indian Villages the Committee remark :—

"A village geographically considered is a tract of country comprising some hundreds, or thousands of acres of arable and

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* Dow has given us the following specimen of a firman or commission of a Fotadar or District Treasurer which enables us to form some idea of a Fotadar's official position and responsibilities :—

To our honoured and faithful Mirza Abrahim Crorie of Perganah Mahomedabad be it known : that as the Office of Fotadar of the abovementioned Pergannah hath become vacant, we have been pleased to appoint our trusty and diligent servant Jaffier Beg to that Office. You are therefore commanded to give into his custody all the rents and customs of the Dewany in that district, and he shall lodge it with care in his treasury ; and you are to take his receipts, which you are to send monthly to the royal Exchequer, nor are you permitted to keep one Dam of the revenues in your own hands after the stated periods, and you must beware of treating any of his agents ill, which he may send to demand the collections. And should there be any deficiencies in his accounts, you are to be answerable for the same : know this to be confirmed, nor deviate from the order.

waste land. Politically viewed, it resembles a corporation or township."

The state of taxation is described by the same committee in the following terms: "By the custom of the Hindu Government, the cultivators were entitled to one half of the paddy produce (that is grain in the husk) depending on the periodical rains. Of the crops from the dry grain lands, watered by artificial means, the share of the cultivator was about two thirds. Before the harvest commenced the quantity of crop was ascertained in the presence of the inhabitants and village servants, by the survey of persons, unconnected with the village, who, from habit, were particularly skilful and expert in judging of the amount of the produce, and who, in the adjustment of this business, were materially aided by a reference to the produce of former years, as recorded by the accountants of the villages. The quantity which belonged to the Government being thus ascertained, it was received in kind, or in money."

"Such," continue the committee, "were the rights of the ryots, according to the ancient usage of the country. In consequence, however, of the changes introduced by the Mahomedan conquest, and the many abuses which later times had established, the share really enjoyed by the ryots was often reduced to a sixth, and but seldom exceeded a fifth. The assessments had no bounds but those which limited the supposed ability of the husbandman. The effects of this unjust system were considerably augmented by the custom, which had become common with the Zemindars, of sub-renting their lands to farmers, whom they armed with unrestricted powers of collection, and who were thus enabled to disregard, whenever it suited their purpose, the engagements they entered into with the ryots; besides practising every species of oppression, which an unfeeling motive of self-interest could suggest. If they agreed with the cultivators at the commencement of the year, for a rent in money, and the season proved an abundant one, they then insisted on receiving their dues in kind. When they did take their rents in specie, they hardly ever failed to collect a part of them before the harvest time had arrived and the crops were cut; which reduced the ryots to the necessity

of borrowing from money lenders, at a heavy interest of 3, 4 and 5 per cent per month, the sums requisite to make good the anticipated payments that were demanded of them. If, from calamity or other cause, the ryots were the least remiss in the discharge of their rents, the officers of the renters were instantly quartered upon them; and these officers they were obliged to maintain, until these might be recalled on the demand being satisfied. It was also a frequent practice with the renters to remove the inhabitants from fertile lands, in order to bestow them on their friends and favourites, and to oblige the ryots to assist farmers, in the tilling of their lands; and to furnish them gratuitously with labourers, bullocks, carts, and straw."

Before passing from this part of the subject I would place before you the following from *Tarikh-i-Badauni* and invite reference to the Revenue Regulations to be found in the *Akbar-Nama* of Abdul Fazl which I append.*

"In this year (982) an order was promulgated for improving the cultivation of the country, and for bettering the condition of the *raiyats*. All the *parganas* of the country, whether dry or irrigated, whether in towns on hills, in deserts and jungles, by rivers, by reservoirs, or wells, were all to be measured, and every such piece of land as, upon cultivation, would produce one *kror* of *tankas*, was to be divided off, and placed under the charge of an officer to be called *krori*, who was to be selected for his trustworthiness, and whether known or unknown to the revenue clerks and treasurers. So that in the course of three years all the uncultivated land might be brought into cultivation, and the public treasury might be replenished. Security was taken from each one of these officers. The measurement was begun in the vicinity of Fathpúr. One *kror* was named Adampúr, another Shethpúr, another Ayúbpur, and so on, according to the names of the various prophets (and patriarchs). Regulations were circulated, but eventually these regulations were not observed as they ought to have been. A great portion of the country was laid

* Vide Note II.

waste through the rapacity of the *kroris*, the wives and children of the *raiyats* were sold and scattered abroad, and everything was thrown into confusion. But the *kroris* were brought to account by Rájá Todar Mal, and many good men died from the severe beatings which were administered, and from the tortures of the rack and pincers. So many died from protracted confinement in the prisons of the revenue authorities, that there was no need of the executioner or swordsman, and no one cared to find them graves or grave-clothes. Their condition was like that of the devout Hindús in the country of Kámrúp, who, having dedicated themselves to their idol, live for one year in the height of enjoyment, appropriating everything that comes to their hands; but at the end of the period, one by one they go and assemble at the idol temple, and cast themselves under the wheels of its car, or offer up their heads to the idol.

"All the country, with the exception of that which was under the *khálisa* (exchequer), was held in *jágir* by the *amirs*. But from the prevalence of indulgence and debauchery, extravagance in household expenditure, and accumulation of riches, there was no means of maintaining the soldiery or of fostering the peasants."

So also the author of the *Tabakat-i-Akbari*.

"It had become manifest that much of the cultivable land of Hindústán was lying uncultivated; and to encourage cultivation, some rule for dividing the profits of the first year between the Government and the cultivator seemed to be required. After careful consideration, it was arranged that the various *parganas* should be examined, and that those which contained so much land as being cultivated would yield a *kror* of *tankas*, should be divided off and given into the charge of an honest and intelligent officer, who was to receive the name of *krori*. The clerks and accountants of the exchequer were to make arrangements with these officers, and

send them to their respective districts, where, by vigilance and attention, in the course of three years the uncultivated land might be brought into cultivation, and the revenues recovered for Government. To carry out these views, a number of the most honest and trustworthy servants of the State were selected, and appointed to the office of *krori*. The *amirs* also were called upon severally to appoint *kroris* who were sent into the country upon their responsibility."

9. I conclude my review of the introductory section of Mukundram's poem by alluding to a less controversial matter and a distinctly pleasing feature of the Hindu society of the day—We read, "By order of Raghunath, the songster who has got his dress and ornaments daily rehearses the song"—Raghunath proved a generous patron of letters—and he was not singular in his day. Each landlord had his own band of singers, who beguiled his leisure hours by singing or reciting songs of their own composition. There was no printing press in those days and there was no daily newspaper. Public opinion thus found vent in the songs of these court poets.

Note I.

Twenty-Fifth year of the Reign (of Akbar).

A Census.

An Imperial mandate was issued directing the *jagirdars*, *shikkdars*, and *darogahs* throughout the Empire to draw up, village by village, lists of all the inhabitants, specifying their names and occupations; and that these lists should all be collected together. The officers were not to allow any one to reside who was not engaged in some business or occupation, and they were to inquire into the arrival and departure of clever men, and ascertain whether their designs were good or evil, so that in a short time the true characters of the outwardly respectable and inwardly malicious might be brought to the test. This regulation was the means of establishing tranquillity, and of providing security for the broad expanse of Hindustan.

Note II.

Twenty-Seventh year of the Reign.

Revenue Regulations.

At the beginning of this year, His Majesty directed his attention to an improvement of the administration of his territories and passed new laws for the management of civil and revenue business. Raja Todar Mal had, previous to this, been named as *wazir;* but the dangers and difficulties of the post, and the opposition to be encountered, made him unwilling to accept the office. But this unambitious man, who was acquainted with all the mysteries of administration, was now elevated to the office of *diwan*, and in reality to the *wakalat*. His clear judgment soon set matters to rights. Civil and revenue matters received his especial attention. Careful to keep himself free from all selfish ambition, he devoted himself to the service of the State, and earned an everlasting fame. He devoted his skill and powerful mind to simplify the laws of the State, and he allowed no grasping and intriguing men to obtain any influence over him. He now proposed several new laws calculated to give vigour and glory to the Government.

That the collectors of the *khalisa* lands and the *jagirdars* should realize the *mal* and *jihat* (cesses), according to the *dasturu-l 'amal;* and if by fraud or oppression anything beyond the settled amount should be received from the cultivators, they were to account it an excess of the proper payment, and were to levy a fine upon those who had exacted it, and enter the amount in the monthly accounts. At every harvest they were to carefully guard the rights of the lower classes. These cases of giving and taking were dealt with in two ways;—the complainant received redress, and power was given to punish the offenders.

The *'amils* of the *khalisa* had two subordinates, a *karkun* (manager), and a *khass-navis* (accountant). These officers had been oppressors, and leaguing with the rich, they had been a great source of evil to the poor. If instead of these two infamous officials, one worthy and honest man should be appointed, the country would prosper, and the people would be contented.

It had been discovered that in the *khalisa* districts, the cultivated lands decreased year by year; but if the lands capable of cultivation were once

measured, they would increase year by year in proportion to the powers of the *raiyats*; and engagements should be made for them according to rule. The *raiyats* having nominated each other as sureties, were to take the proper writings, and in all questions of arrears were to be treated in a considerate manner.

For lands which had lain waste four years, they were to receive a deduction of one-half for the first year, for the second year one-quarter, and for the third year they were to pay according to established rule. For lands which had lain untilled for two years they were to receive a deduction of one-fourth for the first year. For uncultivated lands, they were to receive a small allowance of grain, so as to make the lands capable of yielding revenue. When advances were made for the assistance of poor cultivators, engagements were to be taken from men of respectability and part was to be repaid at the spring harvest, part at the autumnal harvest. By these arrangements, the country would in a short period become cultivated, the *raiyats* would be contented, and the treasury flourishing. When the collectors increased the assessment, back payments were not to be required from small and insignificant estates.

Every year a report was to be made to the Emperor by the collecters, so that efficient officers might receive augmentations of their pay, and an increase of their honours and rewards; while those who did not faithfully discharge their duties would incur punishment and fall into disgrace.

When a portion of cultivated land was fixed upon, some surveyors, in proportion to its extent, were to be appointed. They were first to measure the land, and were then to acquaint themselves with its quality and produce. (The collectors) were to select a central spot for their residence. They were to carry out their duties everywhere diligently, and to inquire into the state of affairs. In seasons when a sufficient quantity of rain fell, and the lands received adequate irrigation, two and a half *biswas* (in the *bigha*) were to be left unassessed; in jungles and sandy lands, three *biswas* were to be left. Weekly accounts of sequestrations, and daily accounts of the collections, were to be sent monthly to the Imperial Exchequer. An Imperial order was issued, that when lands suffered under any visitation of Providence, a description of them was to be drawn up, and a copy of it sent to Court, so that the Emperor might give directions appropriate to the case.

If the occupants of hill forts, trusting in the security of their fastnesses, should engage in freebooting, the generals, the *faujdars*, the feudatories, and the revenue collectors were directed to unite and effect a remedy. They

were first to admonish the offenders, and if that proved unavailing, they were to take measures for inflicting chastisement upon them. Their country was to be laid waste, and the land was to be granted to *jagirdars*, from whom the revenue officers were to make no demands. If the Imperial troops received any injury, a fine was to be imposed upon the offenders.

Whatever was levied from the *raiyats* was to be paid over to the treasurers, and they were to give receipts to the *raiyats*. The collectors were to remit the payments four times a month, and at the end of this time no balance was to be left unrealized from the *raiyats*. The *raiyats* were to be so treated that they should be willing to make their payments to the treasury voluntarily. Satisfactory security was to be taken from the disaffected and contumacious; and if the bail was not given, watchmen were to be placed over the crops, and the revenue was to be realized.

A descriptive account was to be drawn up of the assessment of each individual, according to his cultivation and labour, and the dates were not to be either postponed or anticipated. The *patwari* (accountant) of each village was to apportion (the village) name by name, among the various subordinate agents, and the collectors were to send the cash under the seal of the *patwari* to the treasurer. They were to be vigilant to prevent oppression, and to treat each individual according to his deserts. The treasurer was to draw up a statement of the *mohurs*, *rupees*, and *dams* according to the value indicated by their respective names and impressions, and showing the value of the old coinages in the new royal coins, so that the collectors and *sarrafs* might be able to ascertain the respective values of old and new coins. The *La'l-i Jalali* of full weight and perfect touch was of the value of 400 dams. The *Chahargoshah* (four-cornered) rupee was worth forty *dams*. The ordinary (*dasturi*) *ashrafi* and the Akbar-shahi rupee, which had become deteriorated in use, were to be taken at the following rates. If the *ashrafi* was only two *birinj* (grains of rice) deficient, it was to be deemed of full value, and to be received as equal to 360 *dams*. If it was deficient from three *birinj* to one *surkh*, it was to be reckoned at 355 *dams*; if deficient from a *surkh* to a *surkh* and a half, at 350 *dams*. The rupee not more than one *surkh* deficient was to be considered of full value, and worth 39 *dams*. If deficient one and a half to two *surkhs*, it was worth 38 *dams*. The *La'l-i Jalali* of proper touch and just weight; the *Jalala* rupee not more than from one and a half to two *surkhs* deficient; old rupees of the Akbar-shahi coinage which might not be deficient more than from three *birinj* to one *surkh* were to be received at the treasury. Those of greater deficiency were to be tested separately by

the cashier, the particulars of them were to be entered by the accountants in their day-books, and accounts of them were to be sent every day to the Government record office. The *jagirdars*, treasurers, and *sarrafs* (money-changers) were to act upon the abovementioned rules. The officers of the *khalisa* and the *jagirdars* were to make proper reports about the well-conducted and the ill-conducted, the obedient and the refractory people in their jurisdictions, so that they might get their deserts, and that the tranquillity of the country might be secured. Instead of the former expenses (*kharch*), the amount having been settled at one *dam* for each *bigha* of cultivated land, it was hoped that, upon this principle, 24 *dams* might be the estimated sum to be allowed for each cultivator.

IV

MUKUNDRAM

AND

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, A.D. (II)

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MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, AND FELLOW-STUDENTS:

In a noteworthy volume published in England in 1911, one of the Honorary Secretaries of the Essex Archaeological Society has put together a curious collection of the customs and costumes of mediæval England, and indicated the prominent types and outstanding features of the social and economic world of the day. The materials rendered available for examination in this recent publication, only confirm the general conclusions of the student of Chaucer's poetry and of the wonderful national picture gallery to be found in his pages. What we are now told of the merchant princes, of the part played by some of the other subordinate but by no means unimportant characters in the trading world of the day, the characteristics of market towns and the operations of merchant guilds are what might have been naturally expected. Only we realise all the more vividly how true to life are Chaucer's pictures of the merchant with his "forked beard", and of the other members of the trader class, such as the haberdasher, the carpenter, the weaver and the dyer.

All this is full of instruction and full of interest for the student of the social and economic history of India. If the mediæval west had its merchant princes and trade-guilds, India had its Srimanta Sadagars* and caste groups, each following its

* In ancient India, "the regulations of society appear to have awarded a high rank to persons who were employed in the business of commerce." *Heeren.*

own hereditary profession, and the state of things which obtained in Europe in the 15th century of the Christian era apparently corresponds more or less to what we find described in the pages of a sixteenth century Bengali poet. If the present industrial organisation of England is the result of a gradual process of evolution out of the past, we in India have little reason to despair of the economic future of the land. We may take it that the future will work out its own salvation, and a new order of things will spring out of the old mediæval framework which we still find in the Indian social organisation, but which has already lost, to some extent, its rigidity of structure owing to the influence of silent forces brought into operation by India's contact with a wider outer world.

"Internal trade in mediaeval England was carried on chiefly at great annual fairs for the wholesale business, at weekly markets for the chief towns and by means of itinerant traders of whom the modern pedler is the degenerate representative." They had their merchant princes in those days like the De la Poles who were on intimate terms with the highest in the land, who were honoured by visits from the royalty and even entered into matrimonial alliances, with members of the royal family. We have in the publication I spoke of a rude copy of an woodcut from an old manuscript which represents a mediæval shop of a high class, probably a goldsmith's. There is little difficulty in recognising the shopkeeper eagerly bargaining with his customer, while the shopkeeper's clerk is making an entry of the transaction, "and the customer's servant stands behind him, holding some of his purchases; flagons and cups and dishes seem to be the principal wares; heaps of money lie on the table, which is covered with a handsome table-cloth, and in the back-ground are hung on a "perch," for sale, girdles, a hand-mirror, a cup, a purse, and sword." Then there is an illustration of a mediaeval shop from the French National Library.

This is a mercer's, and the merceress describes her wares in the following lines:—

Quod sche, Gene* I schale the telle
Mercerye I have to selle
In boystes,† soote oynementes,
Therewith to don allegementes‡
To ffolkes which be not gladde,
But discorded and malade.
I have kyves, phylletys, callys,
At ffestes to hang upan walles;
Kombes no mo than nyne or ten,
Bothe for horse and eke ffor men;
Mirrours also, large and brode,
And ffor the syght wonder gode
Off hem I have ffull greet plente,
For ffolke that haven volunte
Byholde himselffe therynne.

To an Englishman all these have only an academic or antiquarian interest. To an Indian they are more or less living realities. We have still our annual fairs at Hurdwar, at Sonepur and elsewhere, associated with memories of sacred pilgrimages and national festivals and to some extent serving the purpose of industrial exhibitions in the modern social economy. We have our markets with their weekly or biweekly gatherings of buyers and sellers practically throughout Bengal outside the head-quarters of our Divisional Commissioners. The open movable stalls with their exhibits are prominent features of these gatherings. There are even stalls with their heaps of small change, for book-credit and bank cheques have not yet been able to do away with the need of immediate cash payments on ordinary occasions in rural Bengal, "although India had her gold and silver coinage and

* If. † Boxes. ‡ To give relief.

the conveniences of a system of banking long before the Bardi and Medici of Florence had introduced its blessings into Europe." The 16th Century Bengali poet's account of marketings by house-maids would make us pause and enquire to what extent the life of the mass of our rural population and of those who form the lower strata of Indian society has been affected by the march of events, the spread of education, the stirrings of intellectual life, and the hopes and aspirations engendered thereby.

The following description of the fair of Hurdwar by Captain Hardwicke, (Asiatic Researches, Vol. vi p. 312) will serve to illustrate what is here stated. "This fair is an annual assemblage of Hindoos to bathe, for a certain number of days, in the waters of the Ganges at this consecrated spot. The multitude collected on this occasion might, I think, with moderation be computed at two and a half million of souls. Although the performance of a religious duty is their primary object, yet many avail themselves of the opportunity to transact business, and carry on an extensive annual commerce. In this concourse of nations, it is a matter of no small amusement to a curious observer to trace the dress, features, manners etc. which characterize the people of the different countries of Cabul, Cashmir, Lahore, Bootan, Srinagar, and the plains of Hindoostan. From some of these very distant countries whole families, men, women and children undertake the journey, some travelling on foot, some on horseback and many, particularly women and children, in long heavy carts, railed and covered with sloping matted roofs to defend them against the sun and wet weather; and during the continuance of the fair these also serve as habitations."

Mediæval towns in England owed their origin to various causes. Some were of ancient Roman foundation, others had grown up in the neighbourhood of monasteries or under the sheltering shadow of the castle of some powerful and wealthy lord. "But there is a third category of mediæval

towns which did not descend from ancient towns, or grow by accidental accretion in course of time but were deliberately founded and built in the mediæval period for specific purposes; and in these we have a special interest from our present point of view. There was a period when Kings and feudal Lords from motives of high policy, fostered trade with anxious care; encouraged traders with countenance, protection and grants of privileges and founded commercial towns."

Once, we are told, when an English king on his way back from Scotland was engaged in hunting, he was led by the chase to a particular hamlet belonging to a convent. The king at once perceived the capabilities of the place for a fortress for the security of the kingdom, and a port for the extension of commerce. He left the hunt to take its course, and at once took steps to acquire the site. He issued a proclamation offering freedom and great commercial privileges to all merchants who would build and settle there. He erected there a manor house. In course of time a church was built and the place was fortified by walls and towers.

The point which is of interest to us to note in the present connexion is that this is exactly how a new town with all its environments is described by our poet to have sprung up in India.

The poet begins with an account of the emigration of the Mussulmans from Kalinga, they being among the first to come and settle in the new settlement.

*Foundation of a town in Gujrat.** "Leaving the city of Kalinga, the ryots of all castes settled in the city of the *Bir*

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* কলিঙ্গ নগর ছাড়ি, প্রজা লয় ঘর বাড়ী, আইসে চড়িয়া তাজী, সৈয়দ মোগল কাজী,
নানাজাতি বীরের নগরে। খয়রাতে বীর দিল বাড়ি।
বীরের পাইয়া পাণ, বসিল মুসলমান, পুরের পশ্চিম পটী, বলায় হাসন হাটী,
পশ্চিম দিক বীর দিল তারে॥ একত্র সবার ঘর বাড়ী॥

(the hunter of the story) with their household gods. Accepting the pan (betel) of the *Bir*, in token of their consent to the agreement, the Mussulmans settled there, the western end of the town being assigned to them as their abode. There came the Moghuls, Pathans, Kazis mounted on horses, and the *Bir* gave them rent free lands for their houses. At the extreme western end of their settlement they made their *Hoseinbati* (place of Mohurrum Tazia), and they congregated all about the place. They rise very early in the morning, and spreading a red *patty* (mat) they make their *namajes* five times during the day. Counting the *Sulaimani* beads, they meditate on Pir Paigumbar. Each of them contributes to the decoration of the Mokam (Hosein's house). Ten or twenty sit together and decide cases, always referring to the Koran, while others sitting in the market-place distribute the Pir Shirni (the confectioneries offered to the Pir), beat the drum and raise the flag. They are very wise according to their own estimation, they never yield to any one, and they never give up the *roza* (fast) as long as they have life in them.

ফজর সময়ে উঠি, বিছায়ে লোহিত পাটি,
পাঁচবেরি করয়ে নমাজ।
সোলেমানি মালা ধরে, জপে পীর পেগম্বরে,
পীরের মোকামে দেয় সাঁজ॥
দশ বিশ বেরাদারে, বসিয়া বিচার করে,
অনুদিন পড়য়ে কোরাণ।
সাঁজে ডালা দেই হাটে, পীরের শিরণি বাঁটে,
সাঁঝে বাজে দগড় নিশান॥
বড়ই দানিশবন্দ, কারো নাহি করে ছন্দ,
প্রাণ গেলে রোজা নাহি ছাড়ি।
ধরয়ে কাম্বোজ বেশ, মাথায় না রাখে কেশ
বুক আচ্ছা দিয়া রাখে দাড়ি
না ছাড়ে আপন পথে, দশ রেখা টুপী মাথে
ইজার পরয়ে দৃঢ় নারী।
যার দেখে খালি মাথা, ত'সনে না কহে কথা
সারিয়া ডেলার মারে বাড়ী
আপন টোপর নিয়া, বসিল অনেক মিঞা,
ভুঞ্জিয়া কাপড়ে পোঁছে হাত
সাবানি লোহানি আর,— লোদানি সুরয়ানি চার,
পাঠান বসিল নানা জাত॥
আপন তরফ নিয়া, বসিল অনেক মিঞা,
কেহ নিকা কেহ করে বিয়া।
মোল্লা পড়ায়ে নিকা, দান পায় সিকা সিকা,
দোয়া করে কলমা পড়িয়া॥
করে ধরি খর ছুরী, মুরগী জবাই করি,
দশগণ্ডা দান পায় কড়ি।
বখরী জবাই যথা, মোল্লারে দেয় মাথা,
দান পায় কড়ি ছয় বুড়ি॥
যত শিশু মুসলমান, তুলিল মক্তব স্থান
মখদম পড়ায় পঠনা।
করিয়া চণ্ডীর ধ্যান, শ্রীকবিকঙ্কণ গান,
গুজরাট পুরীর বর্ণনা॥

"Their appearance is rather formidable. They have no hair on the head but they allow their beards to grow down to their chest.

"They always adhere to their own ways. They wear on their head a *topi* (cap) which has ten sides, and what they call an *ijar* (paijama) tied tight round the waist. If they meet one who is bareheaded, they pass him by without uttering a word, but going aside, they throw clods of earth at him. Many *mians* with their followers settled there, they do not use water but wipe their hands on their clothes after taking their food. All four classes of Pathans settled there. Some contract *nikas* and others marry. The *Mollas* for reading the *nika* get a present of a sikka (4 anna bit) and bless the pair by reading the kalma. With a sharp knife they (the Mollas) butcher the fowl and get ten gandas of cowries (less than $\frac{1}{3}$rd of a copper pice) for the job. For butchering a she-goat (*bakri*) the Mollah gets six buries of cowries (about a copper pice) as also the head of the animal killed. *Moktabs* also were set up where young Mahomedans were taught by pious Maulvis.

"By making the Roza Nemaj* some become Gola (Moghul), while by accepting the occupation of a weaver one becomes

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* রোজা নমাজ করি কেহ হইল গোলা।
তাসন করিয়া নাম বলাইল জোলা॥
বলদ বাহিয়া কেহ বলায় মুকেরি।
পিঠা বেচিয়া নাম কেহ বলায় পিঠারি॥
মৎস্য বেচি নাম কেহ ধরাল কাবারি।
নিরন্তর মিথ্যা কহে নাহি রাখে দাড়ি॥
হিন্দু হয়ে মুসলমান হয় গর দাল।
নিশাকালে ভিক্ষা মাগে নাম ধরে কাল॥
সানা বান্ধি নাম বলাইল সানাকর।
জীবন উপায় তার পেয়ে তাঁতি ঘর॥
পট পড়িয়া বুলে কেহ নগরে নগর।
তীরকর হয়ে কেহ নিরমায় শর॥
কাগজ কুটিয়া নাম ধরায় কাগচী।
কলন্দর হয়ে কেহ ফিরে দিবারাতি॥
বসন রঙ্গায়ে কেহ ধরে রঙ্গরেজ
লোহিত বসন শিরে ধরে মহাতেজ
সুন্নত করিয়া নাম বলায় হাজাম।
সহরে সহরে ফিরে না করে বিশ্রাম॥
কাটিয়া কাপড় জোড়ে দরজির ঘটা।
নেয়াল বুনিয়া নাম বলায় বেনটা॥
নানা বৃত্তি করিয়া বসিল মুসলমান।
সাবধান হয়ে শুন হিন্দুর বাখান॥
অভয়ার চরণে মজুক নিজ চিত।
শ্রীকবিকঙ্কণ গান মধুর সঙ্গীত॥

a *Jolha.* Those who drive pack bullocks call themselves *Mookheri.* Those who sell cakes call themselves *Pitari.* Those who sell fish are called *Kabari.* Those who being Hindus become Mussulmans are called *Gorsal* (mixed). Those who beg for alms are called *kals.* Those who make the weaver's looms call themselves *Salakars* (a people who make a living out of the Tantis). Some go from town to town making colored stripes. Some make bows and are called *Tirgars,* while those who make paper are called *Kagozia.* Some wander about night and day and are called Kalandars (Fakirs)."

This is obviously of the highest importance to the student of the social history of Bengal. What were the salient features in the daily life of the Mahomedans in the poet's day, what was their general attitude towards their Hindu neighbours, how did the Hindus feel towards them,—these are some of the questions suggested by the poet's account. The Mahomedans in the picture are represented as a highly devotional class of men. Then as now, nothing is allowed to interfere with their prayers which come regularly five times every day. The principal item of their dress is the *ijar* tightly tied round the waist. They never go out with the head uncovered, the usual head-dress being a kind of ten-sided cap which according to a competent authority continued to be the characteristic head-dress of Mahomedans round about Murshidabad down to a recent date. They have a kind of clannish spirit among them, keeping close to one another and forming a distinct compact community of their own, and yet they are divided into classes among themselves according to the profession which they follow. We have thus incidentally an enumeration of the trading pursuits and occupations of the Mahomedans of those days.

They have the *Nika* among them, but the reference to the fees which used to be paid on these occasions to the officiating priest would lead one to suppose that the Nika was looked

upon as an inferior kind of marriage. Our author apparently suggests that Hindus and Mahomedans who live in the land as close neighbours should learn to live in amity. He has no sympathy with manifestations of haughty aloofness or the spirit of contemptuous nonchalance in one community towards the other. He notes that the Mahomedans live in a quarter of their own separated from the Hindus, which reminds one of the *Mussulmanparas* and *Darjiparas* of modern Calcutta, and he refers, apparently regretfully, to the difference in the customs of the two communities.

In all these we have an illustration and a confirmation of what Sir Henry Maine tells us in his *Village Communities viz.* "sometimes men of widely different castes, or Mahomedans and Hindus, are found united in the same village group. But in such cases, the sections of the community dwell in different parts of the inhabited area."

The Mahomedans of the poet's day in Bengal were probably all Shiahs, for they contribute to decorate the house of Hossain, and had their green flags and beat their drums. But the majority of the Bengal Mussalmans could not have been very rich, for they cannot afford a red carpet and have to be satisfied with a red mat (*pati*). Agreements between parties must have been entered into by the acceptance of *pan*, for accepting the Pan of the Hero, we are told, the Mussalmans settled in the new town.

It may be noticed in passing that one of the inferences suggested by Mukundram's account is that the education of the young was not neglected by the Mahomedans of those days, and the teaching imparted in the *Moktabs* could not have been altogether dissociated from religion, for if we accept the testimony of the poet, as I have no doubt we may, these educational institutions were placed under the guidance of pious and learned Maulvis.

Permit me to place before you in this connection the following Regulations regarding Education which Akbar promulgated:—

> In every country, but specially in Hindūstān, boys are kept for years at school, where they learn the consonants and vowels. A great portion of the life of the students is wasted by making them read many books. His Majesty orders that every school boy should first earn to write the letters of the Alphabet, and also learn to trace their several forms. He ought to learn the shape and name of each letter, which may be done in two days, when the boy should proceed to write the joined letters. They may be practised for a week, after which the boy should learn some prose and poetry by heart, and then commit to memory some verses to the praise of God, or moral sentences each written separately. Care is to be taken that he learns to understand everything himself; but the teacher may assist him a little. He then ought for some time to be daily practised in writing a hemistich or a verse and will soon acquire a current hand. The teacher ought especially to look after five things: knowledge of the letter; meanings of words; the hemistich; the verse; the former lesson. If this method of teaching be adopted, a boy will learn in a month, or even in a day, what it took others years to understand, so much so that people will get quite astonished. Every boy ought to read books on morals, arithmetic, the notation peculiar to arithmetic, agriculture, mensuration, geometry, astronomy, physiognomy, household matters, the rules of government, medicine, logic, the *tabi'i*, *riyázi*, and *iláhi* sciences, and history; all of which may be gradually acquired.

These regulations, we are told, "shed a new light on schools and cast a bright lustre over Madrasahs."

I may explain that the *Tabii* would include the Physical Sciences, while *Riyazi* includes Mathematics and Rhetoric and *Ilahi* is Theology.

These expressions thus remind one of the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* of the middle ages in Europe, the former including the first three liberal arts viz., Rhetoric, Grammar and Logic, *quadrivium* including the other four viz, Arithmetic, Music, Geometry and Astronomy.

Frederic Harrison in his *Autobiographical Memoirs,* which came to our hands last year has sounded a timely and necessary warning for us.

He tells us, " Greatly as I value the acute and laborious research which is stimulated by learned historical Societies, too often I am reminded of the inevitable tendency of petty isolated researches to breed an arid specialism which must choke and then dissipate the serious study of history. Let us regard history as the instrument of a true sociology of human evolution and not as an end in itself. To collect facts about the past, and leave the social application of this information for any one or no one to give it a philosophic meaning, is merely to encumber the future with useless rubbish."

May we all, who are interested in carrying on historical studies and sociological researches such as I have attempted to-day, profit by these words; and may we learn so to use the results of our investigations as not " to encumber the future merely with useless rubbish !"

V

EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS

IN

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, A.D. (I)

V

EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS

IN

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, A.D. (I)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, and Fellow-Students:

I propose in some of my subsequent papers to speak of the sociological data supplied by contemporary Vernacular Literature of Bengal in the 16th Century. I propose also to refer to the light which that literature throws on the trading operations in the country. If the inferences to be drawn from contemporary literature are also the inferences suggested by the narratives of foreign travellers who may have visited Bengal in course of their wanderings in the 16th Century, we shall have presented before us a noteworthy example of historical coincidence—the two sources of our information—indigenous literature and narratives of foreign travellers, each testifying to the accuracy of the descriptions and the faithfulness of the observations of the other. To-day I therefore recall to your mind the wonderfully vivid if somewhat concise narratives of two such wanderers, Master Cæsar Frederick, a merchant of Venice who visited the East Indies about the year 1563, and Ralph Fitch, who came to India in his celebrated *Tiger* about the year 1583 and did not leave these Eastern regions till 1591. These narratives form parts of that remarkable collection of voyages and discoveries which Richard Hacqluit made—a collection which truly breathes that spirit of adventure and testifies to that exaltation of national feeling which constitute at once the glory and the essential characteristics of Elizabethan England. And be it remembered here, that if the assumption of the direct government

of India by the British Crown is in the times of our beloved departed Queen Empress Victoria of pious memory, the first vitally intimate contact between England and India which no doubt paved the way for the incorporation of the East India Company is in the spacious times of that other great British Queen, Elizabeth. Here is her letter to Akbar, which Ralph Fitch and his leader and comrade John Newberry brought with them—a letter which says little and yet which means such a great deal.

A letter written from the Queenes Majestie, to Zelabdim Echebar, and sent by John Newbery. In February Anno 1583.*

Elizabeth by the grace of God, &c. To the most invincible, and most mightie prince, Lord Zelabdim Echebar King of Cambay, Invincible Emperor, &c. The great affection which our Subjects have, to visit the most distant places of the world, not without good will and intention to introduce the trade of marchandize of al nations whatsoever they can, by which means the mutual and friendly trafique of marchandize on both sides may come, is the cause that the bearer of this letter John Newbery, joyntly with those that be in his company, with a curteous and honest boldnesse, doe repaire to the borders and countreys of your Empire, we doubt not but that your imperiall Majestie through your royal grace, will favourably and friendly accept him. And that you would doe it the rather for our sake, to make us greatly beholding to your majestie; wee should more earnestly, and with more wordes require it, if wee did think it needful. But by the singulr report that is of your imperial majesties humanitie in these uttermost parts of the world; we are greatly eased of that burden, and therefore we use the fewer and lesse words: onely we request that because they are our

* The great Jalaloodeen Ukbur, liberal, merciful, and intrepid, a follower of Truth in all her obscure retreats and a generous friend of her humblest and least attractive votaries. Keene's *Moghul Empire.*

subjects, they may be honestly intreated and received. And that in respect of the hard journey which they have undertaken to places so far distant, it would please your majestie with some libertie and securitie of voiage to gratifie it, with such privileges as to you shall seeme good: which courtesie if your Imperial majestie shal to our subjects at our requests performe, we according to our royal honour, will recompence the same with as many deserts as we can. And herewith we bid your Imperial majestie to farewel.

I now place before you, as far as possible in the very words of Master Thomas Hickocke himself who translated the narrative from the original Italian, without any attempt at contraction or suppression of details, what Master Cæsar Frederick, the Venetian merchant, tells us about Orissa, about Satgaon and a few other relevant things more or less strictly appertaining to Bengal. My only regret is that I have for the present to withhold from your view the information which the traveller's narrative supplies regarding other parts of India such as Vijaynagar, and the neighbouring regions of Bengal such as Aracan and Pegu. The title of the work and the author's address to the reader prepare us for what to expect in the narrative.

The voyage and travell of M. Caesar Fredericke, marchant of Venice, into the East India, and beyond the Indies. Wherein are conteined the customs and rites of those countries, the merchandises and commodities, as well of golde and silver, as spices, drugges, pearles, and other jewels: translated out of Italian by M. Thomas Hickocke.

Caesar Fredericke to the Reader.

I having (gentle Reader) for the space of eighteene yeeres continually coasted and travelled, as it were, all the East Indies, and many other countreys beyond the Indies, wherein I have had both good and ill successe in my travells: and

having seene and understood many things woorthy the noting, and to be knowen to all the world, the which were never as yet written of any: I thought it good (seeing the Almighty had given me grace, after so long perils in passing such a long voyage to returne into mine own countrey, the noble city of Venice) I say, I thought it good, as briefly as I could, to write and set forth this voyage made by me, with the marvellous things I have seene in my travels in the Indies: The mighty Princes that governe those countreys, their religion and faith that they have, the rites and customes which they use, and live by, of the diverse successe that happened unto me, and how many of these countreys are abounding with spices, drugs, and jewels, giving also profitable advertisement to all those that have a desire to make such a voyage. And because that the whole world may more commodiously rejoyce at this my travell, I have caused it to be printed in this order: and now I present it unto you (gentle and loving Reader) to whom for the varieties of things herein conteined, I hope that it shall be with great delight received. And thus God of his goodnesse keepe you.

Here follows the account of the kingdom of Orissa, and the river Ganges.

"Orissa was a faire kingdom and trustie, through the which a man might have gone with golde in hande without any daunger at all, as long as the lawefull King reigned which was a Gentile, who continued in the city called Catecha, which was within the land sixe days journey. This king loved strangers marveilous well, especially marchants which had traffique in and out of his kingdome, in such wise that hee would take no custome of them, neither any grievous thing. Onely the shippe that came thither payde a small thing according to her portage, and every yeere in the port of Orisa were laden five and twentie or thirtie ships great and small, with ryce and diverse sortes of fine white bumbaste cloth,

oyle of Zerzeline which they make of a seed, and it is very good to eate and to fry fish withal, great store of butter, Lacca, long pepper, Ginger, mirabolans dry and condite, great store of cloth of herbes, which is a kinde of silke which groweth amongst the woods without any labour of man, and when the bole thereof is growen round as bigge as an Orenge, then they take care onely to gather them. About sixteene yeeres past, this king with his kingdome were destroyed by the King of Patane, which was also king of the greatest part of Bengala, and when he had got the kingdome, he set custome there twenty procento, as marchants paide in his kingdome: but this tyrant enjoyed his kingdome but a small time, but was conquired by another tyrant, which was the great mogol king of Agra, Delly, and of all Cambaia, without any resistance. I departed from Orisa to Bengala, to the harbour Piqueno, which is distant from Orisa towardes the East a hundred and seventie miles. They goe as it were rowing alongst the coast fiftie and foure miles, and then we enter into the river Ganges: from the mouth of this river to a citie called Satagan, where the marchants gather themselves together with their trade, are a hundred miles, which they rowe in eighteene houres with the increase of the water: in which river it floweth and ebbeth as it doth in the Thamis, and when the ebbing water is come, they are not able to rowe against it, by reason of the swiftnesse of the water, yet their barkes be light and armed with oares, like Foistes, yet they cannot prevail against that streeme, but for refuge must make them fast to the banke of the river untill the next flowing water, and they called these barkes *Bazars** and Patuas: they rowe as well as a Galliot, or as well as ever I have seene any. A good tides rowing before you come to Satagan, you shall have a place which is called Buttor, and

* *Budgerows.* House-boats are still known by this name.

from thence upwards the ships doe not goe, because that upwards the river is very shallowe, and little water. Every yeere at Buttor they make and unmake a Village, with houses and shoppes made of strawe, and with all things necessarie to their uses, and this village standeth as long as the ships ride there, and till they depart for the Indies, and when they are departed, every man goeth to his plot of houses, and there setteth fire on them, which thing made me to marvaile. For as I passed up to Satagan, I saw this village standing with a great number of people, with an infinite number of ships and *Bazars*, and at my returne coming downe with my captaine of the last ship, for whom I tarried I was al amazed to see such a place so soone razed and burnt, and nothing left but the signe of the burnt houses. The small ships go to Satagan, and there they lade."

In reviewing this account written more than three hundred years ago, one would like to dwell in the first place on the traveller's enumeration of the natural products of the soil, which no doubt formed the staple articles of trade between India and the west; secondly, the reference to the primitive modes of navigation, and thirdly the temporary stalls with which we are all familiar in Bengal on occasions of local fairs, and of which our Venetian traveller speaks under a curious misapprehension. "Unchanging East", is the reflection called up by the narrative. For, after three centuries of agricultural improvements, besides the jute and the tea, we in India have added few to the natural products here enumerated, which may form articles of export. Again, all who have travelled in native crafts through the *Sunderbuns*, say from Calcutta to Khulna or to Barisal, would at once recognise how true to life is the Venetian's narrative, and how our boatmen even in these days wait hours and hours for the coming of the tide, and how slow but steady and rhythmical is their manipulation of the oars.

In reference to jute as an article of export, which I spoke of just now, we may note what has been stated by a highly competent authority.*

"As the result of his explorations of India, Tavernier introduced to the notice of European manufacturers the jute fibre, now such an important export from India. It made in those days coarse gunny bags for wrapping up merchandise. Jute fibre is produced by a bush known scientifically as *corchosus capsularis*. This is a near relation of the corchosus, with beautiful yellow rose-like flowers, which is such a prominent feature in English gardens in the spring time."

As to *tobacco*, it was introduced into India by the Turks and Persians about the beginning of the seventeenth century, during the latter part of the reign of Akbar. Asad Beg† has given us an interesting account of its introduction into Akbar's court, who, we are told, expressed great surprise on the occasion and examined the tobacco which was made up in pipefulls. It did not come into common use for some time after its introduction, and we are told by Bowrey that *hemp* or *bhang* was the herb which generally served as a narcotic for the people in the seventeenth century. Hence tobacco does not naturally find a place among the articles mentioned by our sixteenth century travellers. I may in this connection refer to the following statement which we have in Jahangir's *Memoirs*. "As the smoking of tobacco had taken a very bad effect upon the health and mind of many persons, I ordered that no one should practise the habit. My brother Shah Abbas, King of Persia, also being aware of its evil effects had issued a command against the use of it in Iran."

This edict against the use of tobacco must have come with very good grace from Jahangir, who had such a strong partiality for wine.

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* Sir Harry Johnston.

† *Vide* Note I.

Here is the account of the *Citie of Satagan.*

"In the port of Satagan every yeere lade thirtie or five and thirtie ships great and small, with rice, cloth of Bombast of diverse sortes, Lacca, great abundance of sugar, mirabolans dried and preserved, long pepper, oyle of Zerzeline, and many other sorts of marchandise. The citie of Satagan is a reasonable faire citie for a citie of the Moores, abounding with all things, and was governed by the king of Patane, and now is subject to the great Mogul. I was in this kingdome foure moneths, whereas many marchants did buy or fraight boates for their benefites, and with this barkes they goe up and downe the river of Ganges to faires, buying their commoditie with a great advantage, because that every day in the weeke they have a faire, now in one place, and now in another, and I also hired a barke and went up and downe the river and did businesse, and so in the night I saw many stange things. The Kingdome of Bengala in times past hath bene as it were in the power of Moores, nevertheless there is great store of Gentiles among them alwayes whereas I have spoken of Gentiles, is to be understood Idolaters, and whereas I speak of Moores I meane Mahomets sect. Those people especially that be within the land doe greatly worship the river of Ganges for when any is sicke, he is brought out of the countrey to the banke of the river, and there they make him a small cottage of strawe, and every day they wet him with that water, whereof there are many that die, and when they are dead, they make a heape of sticks and boughes and lay the dead body thereon, and putting fire thereunto, they let the bodie alone untill it be half roasted, and then they take it off from the fire, and make an emptie iarre fast about his necke, and so throw him into the river. These things every night as I passed up and downe the river I saw for the space of two moneths, as I passed to the fayres to buy my commodities with the marchants. And this is the cause that the Portugales will not drinke of the water of the river Ganges, yet to the sight

it is more perfect and clearer than the water of the Nilus is."

Fortunately for us, Master Caesar Frederick as well as Ralph Fitch had drawn up fairly full lists of the articles in which the East traded with the West in those days. I invite a comparison of these with the articles mentioned by our sixteenth century Bengali poet, Mukundram, as constituting the staple articles of trade between Bengal and Ceylon, which practically meant between the East and the West—for Ceylon long continued to be an emporium of trade and a meeting ground between the East and the West till the relative importance of the trade routes was changed by that epochmaking event,—the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope—an event which will never lose its interest for those who love to note how "through the ages one increasing purpose runs, and the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns." Besides, the poet's picture of India's trade with Ceylon may legitimately be taken to stand for a general picture of India's foreign trade. Master Ralph Fitch concludes his narrative thus—

Here I thought good, before I make an end of this my book to declare some things which India and the country further eastward do bring forth.

The pepper groweth in many part, of India, especially about Cochin and much of it doeth grow in the fields among the bushes without any labour: and when it is ripe they go and gather it. The shrubbe is like unto our ivy tree: and if it did not run about some tree or pole, it would fall downe and rot. When they first gather it, it is greene: and then they lay it in the sun, and it becometh blacke.

The ginger groweth like unto our garlike, and the root is the ginger: it is to be found in many parts of India.

The cloves doe come from the Iles of the Moluccoes, which be divers Ilands. their tree is like to our bay tree.

The nutmegs and maces grow together, and come from the Ile of Banda: the tree is like to our walnut tree, but somewhat lesser.

The white sandol is wood very sweet and in great request among the Indians; for they grinde it with a little water, and anoynt their bodies therewith: it commeth from the Isle of Timor.

Camphora is a precious thing among the Indians, and is solde dearer then golde. I thinke none of it commeth for Christendome. That which is compounded commeth from China but that which groweth in canes and is the best, commeth from the great Isle of Borneo.

Lignum alœs commeth from Cauchinchina.

The beniamin commeth out of the countreys of Siam and Iangomes.

The long pepper groweth in Bengala, in Pegu, and in the Ilands of the Iavas.

The muske commeth out of Tartarie, and is made after this order, by report of the marchants which bring it to Pegue to sell; In Tartarie there is a little beast like unto a yong roe, which they take in snares, and beat him to death with the blood: after they cut out the bones, and beat the flesh with the blood very small, and fill the skin with it: and hereof cometh the muske.

Of the amber they holde divers opinions; but most men say it commeth out of the sea, and that they finde it upon the shores side.

The rubies, saphires, and spinelles are found in Pegu.

The diamants are found in divers places, as in Bisnagar, in Agra, in Delli, and in the Ilands of the Javas.

The best pearles come from the Iland of Baharim in the Persian Sea, the woorser from the Piscaria neere the Isle of

Ceylon, and from Aynam a great Iland on the Souther-most coast of China.

Spodium and many other kindes of drugs come from Cambia.

The following is the list which Master Caesar Frederick has drawn up for us. I shall only state that the remarkable thing about it is its exact correspondence with the list of the later traveller which I have just placed before you.

I thinke it very necessary before I ende my voyage, to reason somewhat, and to shewe what fruits the Indies do yeeld and bring forth. First, in the Indies and other East parts of India there is Peper and ginger, which groweth in all parts of India. And in some parts of the Indies, the greatest quantitie of peper groweth among wilde bushes, without any manner of labour: saving, that when it is ripe they goe and gather it. The tree that the peper groweth on is like to our Ivie, which runneth up to the tops of trees wheresoever it groweth: and if it should not take holde of some tree, it would lie flat and rot on the ground. This peper tree hath his floure and berry like in all parts to our Ivie berry and those berries be graines of peper: so that when they gather them they be greene, and then they lay them in the sunne, and they become blacke.

The Ginger groweth in this wise: the land is tilled and sowen, and the herbe is like to Panizzo, and the roote is the ginger. These two spices grow in divers places.

The Cloves come all from the Moluccas, which Moluccas are two Islands, not very great, and the tree that they grow on is like to our Lawrell tree.

The Nutmegs and Maces, which grow both together, are brought from the Island of Banda, whose tree is like to our walnut tree, but not so big.

All the good white sandol is brought from the Island of Timor. Canfora being compound commeth all from China,

and all that which groweth in canes commeth from Borneo, and I thinke that this canfora commeth not into these parts: for that in India they consume great store and that is very dear. The good Lignum Aloes commeth from Cauchinchina.

The Beniamin commeth from the Kingdom of Assi and Sion. Long peper groweth in Bengala, Pegu, and Java.

Muske commeth from Tartaria, which they make in this order, as by good information I have been told. There is a certaine beast in Tartaria which is wilde and as big as a wolfe, which beast they take alive, and beet him to death with small staves $\frac{t}{y}$ his blood may be spread through his whole body, then they cut it in pieces, and take out all the bones, and beat the flesh with the blood in a morter very smal, and dry it, and make purses to put it in of the skin, and these be the cods of muske.

Truely I know not whereof the Amber is made, and there are divers opinions of it, but this is most certain, it is cast out of the Sea, and throwne on land, and found upon the sea bankes.

The Rubies, saphyres, and the spinels be gotten in the Kingdome of Pegu. The Diamants come from divers places; and I know but three sorts of them. That sort of Diamants that is called chiappe, commeth from Bezeneger. Those that be pointed naturally come from the land of Delly, and from Java, but the Diamants of Java are more waightie then the other. I could never understand from whence they that are called Balassi come.

Pearles they fish in divers places.

From Cambaza commeth the spodiam which congeleth in certaine canes, whereof I found many in Pegu, when I made my house there, because that (as I have sayd before) they make their houses there of woven canes like to mats. From Chaul they trade alongst the coast of Melinde in Ethiopia,

within the land of Cafraria: on that coast are many good harbors kept by the Moores. Thither the Portugals bring a kinde of Bombast cloth of a low price, and great store of Paternosters or beads made of paltrie glasse which they make in Chaul according to the use of the countrey: and from thence they carry Elephants teeth for India, slaves called cafari, and some Amber and Gold. On this coast the King of Portugall hath his castle called Mozambique, which is of as great importance as any castle that hee hath in all his Indies under his protection, and the captaine of this castle hath certaine voyages to this cafraria, to which places no Marchants may goe, but by the Agent of this captaine: and they use to goe in small shippes, and trade with the cafars, and their trade in buying and selling is without any speach one to the other. In this wise the Portugals bring their goods by litle and litle alongst the Sea coast, and lay them downe: and so depart, and the cafar Marchants come and see the goods, and there they put downe as much golde as they thinke the goods are worth, and so goe their way and leave their golde and the goods together, then commeth the Portugal, and finding the golde to his contente, hee taketh it and goeth his way into his ship, and then commeth the cafar and taketh the goods and carrieth them away: and if he finde the golde there still, it is a signe that the Portugals are not contented, and if the cafar thinke he hath put too litle, he addeth more, as he thinketh the thing is worth: and the Portugales must not stand with them too strickt; for if they doe, then they will have no more trade with them: For they disdaine to be refused, when they thinke that they have offered enough, for they bee a peevish people, and have dealt so of a long time: and by this trade the Portugales change their commodities into golde, and cary it to the castle of Mozabique which is in an Island not farre distant from the firme land of cafraria on the coast of Ethiopia, and is distant from India 2,800 miles.

I now come to Ralph Fitch who with his imprisonment and subsequent escape had a far more exciting experience than Master Caesar Frederick. The narrative of Fitch throughout breathes the spirit which animates the pages of Charles Kingsley's 'Westward Ho,' the spirit of daring and risking, of adventuring and energising which has been rightly regarded as the chief constituent of the romance of history.

As regards the celebrated *Tiger*, I may be permitted to refer to the speech of one of the witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (Act 1, Scene 111):—

> A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
> And munch'd, and munch'd and munch'd. 'Give me' quoth I;
> 'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed ronyon cries.
> Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o'the Tiger:
> But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
> And, like a rat without a tail,
> I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

Shakespeare could not have been unmindful of Master Fitch and his adventures when writing this speech—which thus throws light on the interest excited by the doings of these caravans and merchant adventurers in Elizabethan England, besides affording a valuable piece of internal evidence helping us to determine the date of the composition of the play.

In this connection, I may also refer to our friend, the immortal Malvolio of the *Twelfth Night*—a play which appeared in 1601, and is thus contemporaneous with the founding of the English East India Company. Malvolio smiles his face into more lines than are in the new map, with the augmentation of the Indies (Act 111, Scene 11). This is how the East India Company had already begun to change the map of the world, and it is something to remember and to be proud of that the East Indies were so prominently present in Shakespeare's mind. Indeed there is nothing to wonder in this, for national literature is but the reflex of national ideals and national aspirations.

Before entering into the details of Fitch's narrative, let me take you back to two still earlier European travellers—Barbosa and Varthema—Barbosa a Portuguese whose narrative speaks to us of Bengal about the year 1514 A. D., and Varthema who paid a passing visit to our province about 1505. The English translator of Barbosa—the Hon'ble Henry Stanley, referring to the manuscript in the Barcelona Library states that "this work is not a book of travels; it is rather an itinerary or description of countries. It gives ample details of the trade, supplies, and water of the various seaports mentioned in it. It contains many interesting historical details, some of which, such as the account of Diu, the taking of Ormuz, the founding of the Portuguese Fort in Calicut, their interruption of the Indian trade to Suez by capturing the Indian ships &c. fix pretty nearly the exact date at which the narrative was composed as the year 1514."

This is what we learn from Barbosa about the Kingdom of Orissa and about Bengal.

KINGDOM OF ORISSA.

It is of the Gentiles, very good fighting men, and the king is frequently at war with the king of *Narsynga*,* and is powerful in the numbers of his foot soldiers. The greater part of his country is withdrawn from the sea, and has few seaports and little trade. His territory extends seventy leagues along the coast as far as the river Ganges, which they call Guenga, and on the other side of this river commences the kingdom of Bengala, with which he is sometimes at war. And all the Indians go in pilgrimage to this river to bathe in it, saying that with this they all become safe, because it issues from a fountain which is in the terrestrial paradise. This river is very great and magnificent, it is studded on both banks with opulent and noble cities of

* The Hindu Kingdom of Vijaynagar.

the Gentiles. Between this river and the Eufrates are the first and second India, a territory very abundant and well provided, very healthy and temperate, and from this river further on to Malaca is the third India, according as the Moors say.

BENGAL.

Having passed the river Ganges, along the coast twenty leagues to north-east by east and twelve leagues to the south-west, and then twelve leagues to the east until reaching the river Paralem, is the kngdom of Bengala, in which there are many towns, both in the interior and on the sea-coast. Those of the interior are inhabited by the Gentiles, subject to the King of Bengal, who is a Moor; and the sea-ports are inhabited by Moors and Gentiles, amongst whom there is much trade in goods and much shipping to many parts, because this sea is a gulf which enters towards the north, and at its inner extremity there is a very great city inhabited by Moors which is called Bengala, with a very good harbour. Its inhabitants are white men and well formed. Many foreigners from various parts live in this city, both Arabs and Persians, Abyssinians and Indians, who congregate here on account of the country being very fertile and of a temperate climate. They are all great merchants, and own large ships of the same build as those of Mekkah, and others of the Chinese build which they call jungos, which are very large and carry a very considerable cargo. With these ships they navigate to Cholemender, Malabar, Cambay, Peigu, Tarnasari, Samatra, Ceylon, and Malaca; and they trade in all kinds of goods, from many places to others. There is much cotton in the country, and sugar cane plantations, and very good ginger and much long pepper. They manufacture many kinds of stuffs, extremely fine and delicate, coloured for their own use, and white for trade to all parts; they call them saravetis, and they are excellent women's head gear, and much valued for that

purpose; the Arabs and Persians make caps of this stuff, in such great quantities, that every year they fill several ships with them for different places. And they make others which they call mamuna, and others duguza, and others chautar, and others called topan and sanabafos which are the most valued for their shirts, and which are very durable. They are all of the length of twenty cubits, very little more or less, and in this city they are all at a low price. They are spun by a man with a wheel and woven.

White sugar of very good quality is made in this city, but they do not know how to join it to make loaves, and so they pack it up in powder in stuff covered over with raw hide, well sewn up. They load many ships with it and export it for sale to all parts. And when these marchants were accustomed to go freely and without dread to the parts of Malabar and Cambay with their ships, the quintal of this sugar was worth two ducats and a half in Malabar, and a good sinabafo was worth two ducats, and a piece of muslin for women's caps three hundred maravedis; and a chautar of the best quality six hundred maravedis. And those who brought them gained much money.

They likewise make many preserves in this city of Bengal, very good ones of ginger, and of oranges,* lemons and other

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* About oranges we have the following interesting note in one of Sir Harry Johnston's recently published works:

The orange which was introduced to Mediæval Europe through the Arabs—for such a fruit was practically unknown to the Romans and Greeks before the 8th century of the christian Era—was equivalent to the seville or bitter orange. The sweet orange was apparently first developed from the wild species, and cultivated in China whence it was carried to Ceylon and Southern India. It is generally supposed that "China orange" (as it was called in Elizabeth's day) was first brought to Europe by the Portuguese. This is mainly true and is the reason why throughout most Arabic-speaking countries the ordinary sweet orange is called to this day *Bordigam* or *Portugal*. But Varthema distinctly mentions (if he has been rightly translated) sweet oranges as being cultivated in the southernmost parts of India and in Ceylon, and if that is the case, it is more probable that the Portuguese obtained from these regions the first sweet orange trees which they introduced into Europe in the early part of the 16th century.

fruits which grow in the country. There are also in this country many horses, cows and sheep, and all other meats in great abundance, and very extremely large hens. The Moorish merchants of this city go into the interior of the country and buy many Gentile children of their fathers and mothers, or of others who steal them, and castrate them. Some of them die of it, and those who recover they bring them up very well, and sell them as merchandise for twenty or thirty ducats each to the Persians, who value them much as guards to their wives and houses. The respectable Moors of this city go dressed in long morisco shirts reaching to the instep, white and of slight texture, and underneath, some cloths wrapped round below the waist, and over the shirt a silken sash round the waist, and a dagger set with silver; they wear many jewelled rings on their fingers, and fine cotton caps on their heads. They are luxurious people, who eat and drink a good deal, and have other bad habits. They bathe frequently in large tanks which they have in their houses; they have many servants, and have each of them three or four wives, and as many more as they can maintain. They keep them very much shut up and very richly dressed and adorned with silks and jewels set in gold; they go out at night to visit one another and to drink wine, and hold festivals and marriage feasts. They make various kinds of wine in this country, chiefly of sugar and palm trees, and also of many other things. The women are very fond of these wines, and are much accustomed to them. They are great musicians both in singing and playing on instruments. The men of the common people wear short white shirts half way down the thigh, and drawers, and very small head wraps of three or four turns; all of them are shod with leather, some with shoes, others with sandals, very well worked, sewn with silk and gold thread. The king is a great lord and very rich, he possesses much country inhabited by Gentiles, of whom every day many turn Moors, to obtain the favour of the king and governors. This king possesses more territory further on

the before named gulf, inhabited by Moors and Gentiles, both inland and on the sea coast, which turns to the south.

Of the narrative of Varthema, the Italian, the English translator notes that "it is impossible to peruse the work and not feel a conviction that the writer is telling the truth, that he is recording events which actually took place and describing men, countries and scenes which he had examined with his own eyes. There is a manifest absence of all attempts at composition. The tale is told with a charming simplicity and all the concise freshness of a note-book".

Varthema was apparently more interested in other parts of India, than in Bengal. He came to our Province only for a short time from Tenasserim in one of the ships used by the native inhabitants of that region, of which he gives us a vivid description. He tells us that "these people make use of very large ships and of various kinds, some of which are made flat bottomed, because such can enter into places where there is not much water. Another kind are made with prows before and behind, and they carry two helms and two masts, and are uncovered. There is also another kind of large ship which is called Giunchi, and each of these is of the tonnage of one thousand butts, on which they carry some little vessels to a city called Melacha".

A voyage of eleven days brought him to the "City of Banghella" from Tenasserim.

Varthema represents *Banghella* as one of the finest cities he had hitherto seen. The Sultan was a Muhammadan, and had a standing army of 20,000 men. Here they found the richest merchants they had ever met; the principal exports were cotton and silk stuffs,* which were woven by men and not by women; the country abounded in grain of every kind, sugar, ginger, and cotton, and was withal, the best place in the world

* No doubt these stuffs were conveyed in Arab ships to the red Sea and the Persian gulf whence they were distributed over East Africa, Syria, Egypt and Europe.

to live in. In this latter particular, our author's statement is corroborated by the experience of Ibn Batuta nearly two centuries before, who says, "I never saw a country in which provisions were so cheap. I there saw one of the religious of the West, who told me that he had bought provisions for himself and family for a whole year with eight dirhems," or about twenty-four shillings of our money! At Banghella our adventurers met two Christians from the city of Sarnau in Cathay.

The two Sarnau Christians whom our travellers encountered at *Banghella* had evidently come to that part of India for trading purposes, and as Varthema describes them as writing from right to left, they were probably Nestorians. On seeing the branches of coral which Varthema's Persian companion had for sale, they advised him to accompany them to Pegu, as being the most eligible market for such articles; and the party accordingly set off together on a voyage of "about one thousand miles", during which they "passed a gulf towards the south", (Martaban) and in due time reached their destination.

Varthema's short reference to the "City of Bengala" has given rise to an interesting discussion regarding its identification. Before inviting your attention to some of the salient points of this controversy, let me place before you the following from Major Rennel's *Memoir* of a map of Hindustan.

"Gour, called also Lucknouti, the ancient capital of Bengal, and supposed to be the Gangia Regia of Ptolemy, stood on the left bank of the Ganges, about twenty-five miles below Rajemal. It was the capital of Bengal (730 years B.C.), and was repaired and beautified by Homayoon, who gave it the name of Jennuteabad, which name a part of the Circar, in which it was situated, still bears. According to Ferishta's account, the unwholesomeness of its air occasioned it to be

deserted soon after, and the seat of Government was removed to Tandah or Tanrah, a few miles higher up the river. No part of the site of ancient Gour is nearer to the present bank of the Ganges than four miles and a half, and some parts of it which were regularly washed by that river are now twelve miles from it."

As to the question of the indentification of the site of the city of *Banghella*, which Varthema mentions, I invite attention to the following considerations :—

"(*a*) Varthema's narrative taken in conjunction with Barbosa's account which we have already noticed is satisfactory evidence that a city called *Banghella* or *Bengala* existed at this period, that it was a seaport of considerable trade, and was situated beyond the Hooghly at the head of the gulf known in those days as the Gulf of Bengal. It is remarkable that Barbosa makes no allusion whatever either to Satigan or Chatigam. (Satgong and Chittagong.)

"(*b*) Of the travellers subsequent to Barbosa, Caesar Fredericke (A.D. 1563) represents *Satigan* as a flourishing commercial port, and locates it 120 miles from the mouth of the Ganges (Hooghly), but he does not allude either to Bengala or Chatigam; Ralph Fitch, twenty years later, describes both Satagan and Chatigan, and tells us that Chatigan was called "Porto Grande" by the Portuguese; but he says nothing about Bengala. In Hamilton's time A.D. 1688-1723, the town of Hoogly appears to have succeeded Satign as the chief seaport on the western branch of the Ganges, for he represents the former as "driving a great trade, because all foreign goods are brought thither for import, and all goods of the product of Bengal are brought hither for exportation", which circumstance sufficiently accounts for his not naming Satigan. "Chittagong, or, as the Portuguese call it, Xatigam," he describes at some length, but he never mentions the city of Bengala, which the earlier writers located at no great distance from that town."

(*c*) A map of Asia published by Gastaldi of Venice in 1561 A.D. mentions Bengal as well as Satigan.

After a review of all the available evidence on the subject, Badger, the editor of the volume of Varthema's Travels published by the Hacqluit Society thus concludes :—

In the absence, therefore, of any direct proof to the contrary, beyond the not very reliable information contained in the old atlases, I am inclined to infer that *Bengala* occupied a position between the Hattia and Sundeep islands, situated at the present mouth of the Brahmaputra, which I conceive to be the eastern branch of the Ganges of the earlier geographers.

Note I.

Introduction of Tobacco.

In Bijapur I had found some tobacco. Never having seen the like in India, I brought some with me, and prepared a handsome pipe of jewel work. The stem, the finest to be procured at Achin, was three cubits in length, beautifully dried and coloured both ends being adorned with jewels and enamel. I happened to come across a very handsome mouth-piece of Yaman cornelian, oval-shaped, which I set to the stem; the whole was very handsome. There was also a golden burner for lighting it as a proper accompaniment. 'Adil Khán had given me a betel bag of very superior workmanship; this I filled with fine tobacco, such, that if one leaf be lit, the whole will continue burning. I arranged all elegantly on a silver tray. I had a silver tube made to keep the stem in, and that too was covered with purple velvet.

His Majesty was enjoying himself, after receiving my presents, and asking me how I had collected so many strange things in so short a time, when his eye fell upon the tray with the pipe and its appurtenances; he expressed great surprise, and examined the tobacco, which was made up in pipefuls; he inquired what it was, and where I had got it. The Nawáb Khán-i 'Azam replied: "This is tobacco, which is well known in Mecca and Medina, and this doctor has brought it as a medicine for your Majesty." His Majesty looked at it, and ordered me to prepare and take him a pipe-ful. He began to smoke it, when his physician approached and forbade his doing so. But His Majesty was graciously pleased to say he must smoke a little to gratify me, and taking the mouth piece into his sacred mouth, drew two or three breaths. The physician was in great trouble, and would not let him do more. He took the pipe from his mouth, and bid the Khán-i' Azam try it, who took two or three puffs. He then sent for his druggist, and asked what were its peculiar qualities. He replied that there was no mention of it in his books; but that it was a new invention and the stems were imported from China, and the European doctors had written much in its praise. The first physician said, "In fact, this is an untried medicine, about which the doctors have written nothing. How can we describe to Your Majesty the qualities of such unknown things? It is not fitting that Your Majesty should try it". I said to the first physician: "The Europeans are not so foolish as not to know all about it; there are wise men

among them who seldom err or commit mistakes. How can you, before you have tried a thing and found out all its qualities, pass a judgment on it that can be depended on by the physicians, kings, great men, and nobles? Things must be judged of according to their good or bad qualities, and the decision must be according to the facts of the case". The physician replied, "we do not want to follow the Europeans, and adopt a custom, which is not sanctioned by our own wise men, without trial." I said, "It is a strange thing, for every custom in the world has been new at one time or other; from the days of Adam till now, they have gradually been invented. When a new thing is introduced among a people, and becomes well known in the world, every one adopts it; wise men and physicians should determine according to the good or bad qualities of a thing; the good qualities may not appear at once. Thus the China root, not known anciently, has been newly discovered, and is useful in many diseases". When the Emperor heard me dispute and reason with the physician, he was astonished, and being much pleased gave me his blessing, and then said to Khan-i' Azam, " Did you hear how wisely Asad spoke? Truly, we must not reject a thing that has been adopted by the wise men of other nations merely hecause we cannot find it in our books; or how shall we progress? " The physician was going to say more, when His Majesty stoppod him and called for the priest. The priest ascribed many good qualities to it, but no one could persuade the physician; nevertheless, he was a good physician.

As I had brought a large supply of tobacco and pipes, I sent some to several of the nobles, while others sent to ask for some; indeed, all, without exception, wanted some, and the practice was introduced. After that the merchants began to sell it, so the custom of smoking spread rapidly. His Majesty, however, did not adopt it.

Hálát-i Asad Beg.

VI

EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS

IN

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, A.D. (II)

VI

EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS

IN

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, A.D. (II)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor and Fellow-Students :

Strictly speaking, what Fitch has told us of regions lying outside the limits of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa does not fall within the province of an observer of 16th Century Bengal. But it is hard to resist the temptation of referring you to the activities of some of the notable cities and seaports of Mogul India or of repeating the traveller's naïve statements regarding the primitive customs, the homely joys, the unsophisticated delights of the people of those days.

Listen, for example, to what he tells us of *Chaul* and of *Goa*, of the diverse uses of the palmtree which obviously impressed him greatly, of the cremation of the dead in Hindu India which attracted his attention, and of the marriage festivities he was privileged to witness at Barrampore.*

> The tenth of November we arrived at *Chaul* which standeth in the firme land. There be two townes, the one belonging to the Portugalis, and the other to the Moores. That of the Portugalis is neerest to the sea, and commaundeth the bay, and is walled round about. A little above that is the towne of the Moores which is governed by a Moore king called *Xa-Maluco* (*Shah Bahadur*). Here is great traffike for all sortes of spices and drugges, silke, and cloth of silke, sandales,

* Burhanpore of the Central Provinces.

> elephant's teeth, and much China worke, and much sugar which is made of the nutte called Gagara: the tree is called the Palmer: which is the profitablest tree in the world: it doth alwayes beare fruit and doth yeeld wine, oyle, sugar, vinegar, cordes, coles; of the leaves are made thatch for the houses, sayles for shippes, mats to sit or lie on: of the branches they make their houses, and broomes to sweepes, of the tree wood for shippes. The wine doeth issue out of the toppe of the tree. They cut a branch of a bowe and binde it hard, and hange an earthen pot upon it, which they emptie every morning and every evening and still it and put in certaine dried raysins, and it becommeth very strong wine in short time.

We may note in passing that Fitch has evidently "mixed up the Palmyra with the wild date and the Cocoanut. The nuts of the Palmyra *i.e.* the tree Palm do not yield oil, and the sugar derived from its sap is not as abundant as that from the wild date Palm."*

> Hither many shippes come from all partes of India, Ormus, and many from Mecca: heere be manie Moores and Gentiles. They have a very strange order among them; they worshippe a cowe, and esteeme much of the cowes doung to paint the walles of their houses. They will kill nothing, not so much as a louse: for they holde it a sinne† to kille anything. They eate no flesh, but live by rootes and ryce, and milke. And when the husbande dieth, his wife is burned with him if shee be alive: if she will not, her head is shaven, and then is never any account made of

* Sir Harry Johnston.

† Obviously our traveller here speaks of the Jainas.

her after. They say if they should be buried, it were a great sinne, for of their bodies there would come many wormes and other vermine, and when their bodies were consumed, those wormes would lacke sustenance, which were a sinne; therefore they will be burned. In Cambaia they will kill nothing, nor have anything killed: in the towne they have hospitals to keepe lame dogs and cats, and for birds. They will give meat to the Ants.

Goa is the most principal citie which the Portugals have in India, wherein the viceroy remaineth with his Court. It standeth in an Iland, which may be 25, or 30, miles about. It is a fine citie, and for an Indian towne very faire. The Iland is very faire, full of orchards and gardens, and many palmer trees, and hath some villages. Here be many many marchants of all nations. And the Fleete which commeth every yeere from Portugal, which be-foure, five, or sixe great shippes commeth first hither. And they come for the most part in September, and remaine ther fortie or fiftie dayes; and then goe to Cochin, where they lade their Pepper for Portugall. Oftentimes they lade one in Goa, the rest goe to Cochin which is from Goa an hundred leagues southward. Goa standeth in the countrey of *Hidalcan** who lieth in the countrey sixe or seven daye journey. His chiefe citie is called *Bisapor*.

Fitch came to Burhanpore from Belapur (in Berar).

* The Adil Shah, the Khan Adil, the ruler of the Musulman State of *Bijapore*.

> In this place their money is made of kind of silver round and thicke to the value of twentie pence, which is very good silver. It is marueilous great and a populous country. In their winter which is in June, July, and August, there is no passing in the streets but with horses, the waters be so high. The houses are made of lome and thatched. Here is great store of cotton cloth made, and painted clothes of cotton wool: here groweth great store of corn and Rice. We found marriages great store both in townes and villages in many places where we passed of boys of eight or ten years and girls of five or six years old. They both do ride upon one horse very trimly decked and are caried through the town with great piping and playing, and so return home and eate of a banket made of Rice and fruits, and there they dance the most part of the night and so make an end of the marriage.

The statement which follows immediately afterwards leaves little doubt that this was more a betrothal than a marriage, as the children must have been withdrawn to their parents' keeping till they were of marriageable age.

> They lie not together untill they be ten years old. They say they marry their children so young because it is an order that when the man dieth, the woman must be burned with him: so that if the father die, yet they may have a father-in-law to help to bring up the children which he maried: and also that they will not leave their sons without wives, nor their daughters without husbands.

After this came the imprisonment of Fitch and his escape from Goa, and possibly from the horrors of the Inquisition

which had been set up by the Portuguese even in these Eastern regions.

"At our coming we were cast into prison, and examined before the justice and demanded for letters, and were charged to be spies, but they could prove nothing by us. We continued in prison nntil the two and twentie of December, and then we were set at liberty, putting in sureties for two thousand ducats not to depart the town; which sureties Father Stevens, an English Jesuit which we found there, and another religious man, a friend of his procured for us."

Of what follows we can hardly afford to miss a single word, and I will carry you rapidly through what Fitch tells us of our old glory, *Saptagram* and *Sonargau*, of our Ganges and our *Benares*, and of the Brahmins of India.

Let us start with Fitch at Fatepore.

> "Here in Fatepore we staied all three untill the 28th of September 1585, and then master John Newberie tooke his journey toward the citie of Lahor, determining from thence to goe for Persia and then for Aleppo or Constantinople, whither hee could get soonest passage unto, and directed me to goe for Bengala and for Pegu, and did promise me, if it pleased God, to meete me in Bengala within two yeeres with a shippe out of England. Wil. Leades serued the king of Cambaia. I left William Leades the Jeweller in seruice with the king Zelabdim Echebar in Fatepore, who did entertaine him very well, and gaue him an house and fiue slaues, an horse, and euery day sixe S. S. in money."

"Very likely the jeweller married an Indian wife, and lost all inclination to return to England. At any rate he is not heard of again. Nor indeed was John Newberry, who

seems to have reached Lahor but thence-forth disappeared, having been it is supposed murdered in the journey between there and Persia."*

Fitch went from Agra to Satagam in Bengala, in the companie of one hundred and fourescore boates laden with Salt, Opium, Hinge, Lead, Carpets, and diuers other commodities downe the riuer Iemena.

Thus the journey of Fitch to Bengal was quite a safe and comfortable one, for he had only to embark on a boat at Agra and sail or row down the Jumna into the Ganges. "His boat was one of a little fleet of one hundred and eighty similar vessels mostly laden with salt, opium, indigo, lead, carpets, and other commodities, which Muhammadan and Hindu merchants were taking for sale in Bengal. As he journeyed down these great rivers he passed a panorama of the most varied interest and beauty: swarms of people and swarms of wild birds—immense cranes, Chinese geese, pelicans (which Fitch mistook for swans), adjutant storks, ibises, and flamingoes; waterside temples with strange and fantastic idols of stone or painted wood, some like lions, tigers, monkeys or peacocks, others like men and women and some which could only be compared to devils with four arms sitting cross-legged. The fields by the river banks were full of partridges and turtle doves, and at night time visited by tigers; the towns and market places were patrolled by strange, naked, longhaired beggars. Fitch was perhaps most of all struck with the Brahmans, the Hindu priests."†

The superstitious ceremonies of the Bramanes.

The chiefe marchants are Moores and Gentiles. In these countries they haue many strange ceremonies. The Bramanes which are their priests, come to the water and haue a string about their necks made with great ceremonies, and lade vp water with both their hands, and

* Johnston. † Sir Harry Johnston.

turne the string first with both their hands within, and then one arme after the other out. Though it be neuer so cold, they will wash themselves in cold water or in warme. These Gentiles will eate no flesh nor kill anything. They liue with rice, butter, milke, and fruits. They pray in the water naked, and dresse their meat and eate it naked, and for their penance they lie flat vpon the earth, and rise vp and turne themselues about 30, or 40, times, and vse to heaue vp their hands to the sunne, and to kisse the earth, with their armes and legs stretched along out, and their right leg always before the left. Euery time they lie downe, they make a score on the ground with their finger to know when their stint is finished. The Bramanes marke themselues in the foreheads, eares and throates with a kind of yellow geare which they grind, and every morning they do it. And they haue some old men which go in the streetes with a boxe of yellow pouder, and marke men on their heads and necks as they meet them.

One cannot fail to note how pretty is the picture which follows. Here indeed we get a glimpse of real India, and not merely of the external aspects of the life of the people.

"And their wiues do come by 10. 20. and 30. together to the water side singing, and there do wash themselues, and then vse their ceremonies, and marke themselues in their foreheds and faces, and cary some with them, and so depart singing. Their daughters be married, at, or before the age of 10. Their men may haue 7, wiues."

When they salute one another, they heaue vp their hands to their heads, and say Rame, Rame.

Fro Agra I came to Prage, where the riuer Iemena entereth into the mightie riuer Ganges, and Iemena loseth his name. Ganges cometh out of the Northwest, and runneth East into the gulfe of Bengala. In those parts there are many Tigers and many partriges and turtle doues, and much other foule. Here be many beggers in these countries which goe naked, and the people make great account of them: they call them Schesche. Here I sawe one which was a monster among the rest. He would haue nothing vpon him, his beard was very long, and with the haire of his head he covered his priuities. The nailes of some of his fingers were two inches long, for he would cut nothing from him, neither would he speake. He was accompanied with eight or tenne, and they spake for him. When any man spake to him, he would lay his hand upon his brest and bowe himselfe, but would not speake. Hee would not speake to the king. We went from Prage down Ganges, the which is here very broad. Here is great store of fish of sundry sorts, and of wild foule, as of swannes, geese, cranes, and many other things. The country is very fruitfull and populous. The men for the most part haue their faces shauen, and their heads very long, except some which bee all shauen saue the crowne: and some of them are as though a man should set a dish on their heads, and shaue them round, all but the crowne. In this river of Ganges are many Ilands. His water is very sweete and pleasant, and the country adioyning very fruitfull.

Banaras.

From thence we went to Bannaras which is a great towne, and great store of cloth is made

A pilgrimage of the Gentiles.

there of cotton, and Shashes for the Moores. In this place they be all Gentiles. To this towne come the Gentiles on pilgrimage out farre countreys. Here alongst the waters side bee very many faire houses, and in all of them, or for the most part they haue their images standing. By breake of day and before, there are men and women which come out of the towne and wash themselues in Ganges. And there are diuers old men which vpon places of earth made for the purpose, sit praying, and they giue the people three or four strawes,* which they take and hold them betweene their fingers when they wash themselues : and some sit to marke them in the foreheads, and they haue in a cloth a little Rice, Barlie, or money, which, when they haue washed themselues, they giue to the old men which sit there praying. Afterwards they go to diuers of their images, and giue them of their sacrifices. And when they giue, the old men say certain prayers, and then is all holy. And in diuers places there standeth a kind of image which in their language they call Adi. And they haue diuers great stones carued, whereon they poure water, and throw thereupon some rice, wheate, barly, and some other things. Moreouer, they haue a great place made of stone like to a well with steppes to goe downe ; wherein the water standeth very foule and stinketh : for the great quantitie of flowers, which continually they throwe into it, doe make it stinke. There be alwayes many people in it : for they say when they wash themselues in it, that their sinnes be forgiuen them, because

* The reference no doubt is to *Kusa* grass which is used in sacred *Tarpan*.

God, as they say, did wash himselfe in that place. They gather vp the sand in the bottome of it, and say it is holy. They neuer pray but in the water, and they wash themselues ouerhead, and lade vp water with both their handes, and turne themselues about, and then they drinke a little of the water three times, and so goe to their gods which stand in those houses. Some of them will wash a place which is their length, and then will pray vpon the earth with their armes and legs at length out, and will rise vp and lie downe, and kisse the ground twentie or thirtie times, but they will not stirre their right foote. And some of them will make their ceremonies with fifteene or sixteene pots little and great, and ring a little bel when they make their mixtures tenne or twelue times: and they make a circle of water round about their pots and pray, and diuers sit by them, and one that reacheth them their pots: and they say diuers things ouer their pots many times, and when they haue done, they goe to their gods, and strowe their sacrifices which they thinke are very holy, and marke many of them which sit by, in the foreheads, which they take as a great gift. There come fiftie and sometime and hundred together, to wash them in this well, and to offer to these idols.

They haue in some of these houses their idoles standing and one sitteth by them in warme weather with a fanne to blowe winde vpon them. And when they see any company coming, they ring a little bell which hangeth by them, and many giue them their almes, but specially those which come out of the countrey.

Here some bee burned to ashes, somes scorched in the fire and throwen into the water, and

> dogges and foxes doe presently eate them. The wiues here doe burne with their husbands when they die, if they will not, their heads be shauen, and neuer any account is made of them afterward. The people goe all naked saue a little cloth bound about their middle. Their women haue their necks, armes and eares decked with rings of siluer, copper, tinne, and with round hoopes made of Iuorie, adorned with amber stones, and with many agats, and they are marked with a great spot of red in their foreheads, and a stroke of red vp to the crowne, and so it runneth three manner of wayes. In their Winter, which is our May, the men weare quilted gownes of cotton like to our mattraces and quilted caps like to our Grocers morters, with a slit to looke out at, and so tied downe beneath their eares.

My friends will at once recognise the identity of these items of dress with their modern representatives and will note that lapse of years has wrought absolutely no change in them. But there is a more interesting point still in connection with these quilted caps and quilted gowns.

Major Rennell, I was almost going to say our Major Rennell, in a fascinating volume of Dissertations on the Geography of Herodotus refers to the statement of the Greek historian that the dress of the Indians was cotton, and suggests that he was probably thinking of quilted things like those worn by the Phoenicians and the Assyrians, and refers us to the description of the equipment of the Assyrian forces in the army of Xerxes, *viz.* that they wore linen cuirasses. Thus we may take it that circumstances suggested their own remedy in India as well as in Assyria. The justification for the existence of quilted garments is to be found in the need

for protection against the weather in one country, and in the need for warding off the attacks of the enemy in the other.

If a man or a woman be sicke and like to die, they will lay him before their idols all night, and that shall helpe him or make an ende of him. And if he do not mend that night, his friends will come and sit with him a little and cry, and afterwards will cary him to the waters side and set him vpon a little raft made of reeds, and so let him goe downe the riuer.

When they be married the man and the woman come to the water side, and there is an olde man which they call a Bramane, that is, a priest, a cowe, and a calfe, or cowe with calfe. Then the man and the woman, cowe and calfe, and the olde man goe into the water together, and they giue the olde man a white cloth of foure yards long, and a basket crosse bound with diuers things in it: the cloth hee laieth vpon the backe of the cowe, and then he taketh the cowe by the ende of the taile, and saieth certain wordes: and she hath a copper or a brasse pot full of water, and the man doeth hold his hand by the olde mans hand, and the wiues hand by her husbands, and all haue the cowe by the taile and they poure water out of the pot vpon the cowes taile, and it runneth through all their hands, and they lade vp water with their handes, and then the olde man doeth tie him and her together by their clothes. Which done, they goe round about the cowe and calfe, and then they giue some what to the poore which he alwayes there, and to the Bramane or priest they give the cowe and calfe, and afterwards

This tying of new married folks together by the clothes, was used by the Mexicans in old time.

goe to diuers of their idoles and offer money, and lie downe flat vpon the ground and kisse it diuers times, and then goe their way.

You may not come into the house where the idols stand, with your shooes on. They haue continually lampes burning before them.

Patenaw.

From Bannaras I went to Patenaw downe the riuer of Ganges: where in the way we passed many faire townes, and a countrey very fruitful: and many very great riuers doe enter into Ganges; and some of them as great as Ganges, which cause Ganges to bee of a great breadth, and so broad that in the time of raine you cannot see from one side to the other. These Indians when they bee scorched and throwen into the water, the men swimme with their faces downewards, the women with their faces vpwards, I, thought they tied something to them to cause them to doe so: but they say no. There be very many thieues in this countrey, which be like to the Arabians: for they have no certaine abode, but are sometime in one place and sometime in another. Here the women bee so decked with siluer and copper, that it is strange to see, they vse no shooes by reason of the rings of siluer and copper which they weare on their toes. Here at Patenaw they finde

Gold found.

gold in this manner. They digge deepe pits in the earth, and wash the earth in great bolles, and therein they finde the gold, and they make the pits round about with bricke, that the earth fall not in.

We know from the *Ain-i-Akbari* that the rivers which descended from the Northern mountains in the west of India yielded much gold; and that the Indians in those days

were familiar with the processes of gold washing. We read, "Gold may be obtained by the *saloni* process from the sands of the Ganges and the Indus, and several other rivers as most of the waters of the country are mixed with gold." It would seem that Herodotus was aware of the fact that gold was found in India, a point which comes out in connection with the statement of the Greek historian regarding the payment of the Indian tribute to Darius in gold.

Patenaw is a very long and a great towne. In times past it was a kingdom, but now it is vnder Zelabdim Echebar, the great Mogor. The men are tall and slender, and haue many old folks among them: the houses are simple, made of earth and couered with strawe, the streets are very large. In this towne there is a trade of cotton, and cloth of cotton, much sugar, which they cary from hence to Bengala and India, very much Opium & other commodities. He that is chiefe here vnder the king is called Tipperdas, and is of great account among the people. Here in Patenau I saw a dissembling prophet which sate vpon an horse in the market place, and made as though he slept, and many of the people came and touched his feete with their hands, and then kissed their hands. They tooke him for a great man, but sure he was a lasie lubber. I left him there sleeping. The people of these countries be much giuen to such prating and dissembling hypocrites.

Tanda in Gouren.

From Patenaw I went to Tanda which is in the land of Gouren. It hath in times past bene a kingdom, but now is subdued by Zelabdim Echebar. Great trade and traffique is here of cotton, and of cloth and cotton. The people goe

naked with a little cloth bound about their waste. It standeth in the conntrey of Bengala. Here be many Tigers, wild Bufs, and great store of wilde foule: they are very great idolators. Tanda standeth from the riuer Ganges a league, because in times past the riuer flowing over the bankes, in time of raine did drowne the countrey and many villages, and so they do remaine. And the old way which the riuer Ganges was woont to run, remaineth drie, which is the occasion that the citie doeth stand so farre from the water. From Agra down the riuer Iemena, and downe riuer Ganges, I was five moneths coming to Bengala, but it may be sailed in much shorter time.

Couche: this seemeth to be Quichen, accorted by some among the provinces of China.

I went from Bengala into the country of Couche, which lieth 25 dayes iourny Northwards from Tanda. The king is a Gentile, his name is *Suckel Counse* * : his countrey is great, and lieth not far from Cauchin China : for they say they haue pepper from thence. The port is called Cacchegate. All the countrie is set with Bambos† or Canes made sharpe at both endes and driuen into the earth, and they can let in the water and drowne the ground aboue knee deepe, so that mē nor horses can passe. They poison all the waters if any wars be. Here they haue

* The author of *Burma Past and Present* says that he had a geneological table of the Cooch Behar family in which this prince appears under the name of Sukladuge or Seela Ray : he was the progenitor of the Durrung branch of the family.

† It will thus be seen that the ordinary means of access to its frontier were defended against Mahomedan incursions by sharply pointed bamboo stakes being driven to a certain distance into the ground on most of the routes approaching Kuch Behar. In addition, the people were able to flood the frontier land with water from the river, so that in addition to the stakes the passage of both men and horses was made well nigh impossible. The people of Kuch Behar in those days expanded and pulled downwards the lobes of their ears till they were about 8 inches long. *Johnston.*

much silke and muske, and cloth made of cotton. The people haue eares which be marueilous great of a span long, which they draw out in length by deuises when they be yong.

Our traveller notices that there were no more Mahomedans, the people being either Hindus or Buddhists.

Pure gentilisins.

Here they be all Gentiles, and they kill nothing. They haue hospitals for sheepe, goates, dogs, cats, birds, and for all other liuing creatures. When they be old and lame, they keepe them vntil they die. If a man catch or buy any quicke thing in other places and bring it thither, they will giue him mony for it or other victuals, and keepe it in their hospitals or let it go. They will giue meat to the Ants. Their smal mony is almonds, which often times they vse to eat.

In Mexico they use likewise for small money the fruit Cacao which are like almonds.

No doubt an ideal state of things, to be able to eat the current coin of the realm when hungry!

Hugely.

From thence I returned to Hugeli, which is the place where the Portugals keep in the country of Bengala which standeth in 23 degrees of Northerly latitude, and standeth a league from Satagan: they cal it Porto Piqueno. We went through the wildernes, because the right way was full of thieues, where we passed the countrey of Gouren, where we found but few villages, but almost all wildernes, and saw many buffes, swine and deere, grasse longer than a mā, and very many Tigers. Not far from Porto Piqueno southwestward, standeth an hauen which is called Angeli, in the countrey of Orixa. It was a kingdom of it selfe, and the king was a great friend to strangers. Afterwards it was taken by the king of Patan which was their neighbour, but

Porto Angeli.

he did not enjoy it long, but was taken by Zelabdim Echebar which is king of Agra, Delli, and Cambaia. Orixa standeth 6 daies iourney from Satagan southwestward. In this place is very much Rice, and cloth made of cotton, and great store of cloth which is made of grasse, which they all Yerua, it is like a silke. They make good cloth of it which they send for India and dieurs other places. To this hauen of Angeli come euery yere many ships out of India, Negapatan, Sumatra, Malacca, and diuers other places; and lade from thence great store of Rice, and much cloth of cotton wooll, much sugar, and long pepper, great store of butter and other victuals for India. Satagam is a fair citie for a citie of the Moores, and very plentifull of all things. Here in Bengala they haue euery day in one place or other a great market which they call Chandeau, and they haue many great boats which they cal pericose, wherewithall they go from place to place and buy Rice and many other things: these boates haue 24 or 26 oares to rowe them, they be great of burthen, but haue no couerture. Here the Gentiles haue the water of Ganges in great estimation, for hauing good water neere them, yet they will fetch the water of Ganges a great way off, and if they haue not sufficient to drinke, they will sprinkle a little on them, and then they thinke themselues well. From Satagam I trauelled by the countrey of the king of Tippara or porto Grande, with whom the Mogores or Mogen haue almost continuall warres. The Mogen which be of the kingdom of Recon and Rame, be stronger then the king of Tippara, so that Chatigan or

The like cloth may be made of the long grass in Virginia.

Satagam.

Tippara or Porto Grande.

porto Grande is oftentimes vnder the king of Recon.

It may thus be noted in passing that Fitch found that the people in the Delta of the Ganges on the verge of the Tipperah District were not as yet subdued by the Mogul Emperors. The Mogul Empire was not extended up to the borders of Assam and Burma until the next century.

We may further note the following in this connection :—

(*i*) The name Ramu is applied to the country of Chittagaon in a general description of Bengal which is found in Purchas.

(*ii*) There is now a village called Ramu in the southern part of the Chittagong District, which is a police station.

(*iii*) Hunter states that the District was probably first conquered by the Mahomedans during the period of Afgan supremacy in Bengal between the 13th and 16th centuries. Towards the close of the 16th century Chittagong seems to have been reconquered by the Raja of Arakan, but this was ignored by the Moguls after the final expulsion of the Afgans from Bengal. We find that Todar Mull assessed the place, which must have been about *1582*.

When in Cooch-Bihar Fitch received and recorded the first information which is to be found in English about Bhutan ; and the suggestion has been made that at that time he might have easily passed on to Thibet and Lahsa. What a tract of time intervenes between that and the embassy of Bogle and the days of Warren Hastings !

Bottanter a great Northern country. Merchants of China, Moscouia and Tartarie.

There is a country 4 daies iournie from Couche or Quickeu before mentioned, which is called Bottanter and the citie Bhuttia, the king is called Dermain ; the people whereof are very tall and strong, and there are marchants which come out of China, and they say out of

Muscouia or Tartarie and they come to buy muske, cambals, agats, silke, pepper and saffron like the saffron of Persia. The countrey is very great, 3 moneths iourney. There are very high mountains in this countrey, and one of them so steep that when a man is 6 daies iourney off it, he may see it perfectly. Vpon these mountains are people which haue eares of a spanne long : if their eares be not long, they call them apes. They say that when they be vpon the mountaines, they see ships in the Sea sayling to and fro ; but they know not from whence they come, nor whether they go. There are marchants which come out of the East, they say, from vnder the sunne, which is from China, which haue no beards, and they say there it is something warme. But those which come from the other side of the mountains which is from the North, say there it is very cold. These Northern marchants are apparelled with woollen cloth * and hats, white hosen close, and bootes which be of Moscouia or Tartarie. They report that in their countrey they haue very good horses, but they be litle : some men haue foure, fiue, or six hundred horses and kine : they liue with milke and fleshe. They cut the tailes of their kine, and sell them very deere, for they bee in great request, and much esteemed in those partes. The hair of them is a yard long, the rumpe is aboue a spanne long : they vse to hang them for braueric vpon the heades of their Elephants : they bee much vsed in Pegu and China : they buie and selle by scores vpon the ground. The people be very swift on foote.

These seeme to be the mountains of Imaus, called by the people Cumao.

The aparrel of Tartarie marchants.

Cowes tailes in great request.

* Fa Hien speaking of the people of Shen Shen (Chapter II) notes how the common people wore *felts* and *woollens* instead of blue *cottons* as worn by the Chinese.

From Chatigan in Bengala, I came to Bacola* ; the king whereof is a Gentile, a man very well disposed and delighted much to shoot in a gun. His countrey is very great and fruitful, and hath store of Rice, much cotton cloth, and cloth of silke. The houses be very faire and high builded, the streetes large, the people naked, except a little cloth about their waste. The women weare great store of siluer hoopes about their neckes and armes, and their legs are ringed with siluer and copper, and rings made of elephants teeth.

Serrepore.

From Bacola I went to Serrepore † which standeth vpon the riuer of Ganges, the king is called Chondery. They be all hereabouts rebels against their king Zelabdim Echebar : for here are so many riuers and Ilands, that they flee from one to another, whereby his horsemen cannot preuaile against them. Great store of cotton cloth is made here.

Sinnergan.

Sinnergan ‡ is a towne sixe leagues from Serrepore, where there is the best and finest cloth made of cotton that is in all India. The chiefe king of all these countries is called Isacan, and he is chiefe of all the other kings, and is a great friend to all Christians. The houses here, as they be in the most part of India, are very little, and couered with strawe, and haue a fewe mats round about the wals, and the doore to keepe out the Tygers and the Foxes. Many of the people are

* Backerganj.

† Serampore.

‡ The ancient Mahomedan capital of Eastern Bengal. Azim Shah, son of Sikandar proclaimed his independence here, and invited the poet Hafiz to his court. "It lies hidden in a grove of palms and bush and is surrounded by a deep muddy ditch, once a moat. Isa Khan, who was in power when Fitch visited the city, maintained his independent rule for several years, but at his death the District became part of the Mogul Empire."

> very rich. Here they will eate no flesh, nor kill no beast : They liue of Rice, milke, and fruits. They goe with a little cloth before them, and all the rest of their bodies is naked. Great store of Cotton cloth goeth from hence, and much Rice, wherewith they serue all India, Ceilon, Pegu, Malacca, Sumatra, and many other places.

I have now rapidly carried you through the narratives of the four European travellers who came to Bengal in the 16th century of the Christian era, and have tried to place before you the general results of their observations. The accuracy of these observations and the truthfulness of their narration make us think of Strabo of remote antiquity who told us long ago that "the accounts we receive of India require an impartial and unprejudiced consideration, for it is situate at a very remote distance from us, and but few of our countrymen have examined it with attention ; and those even who have travelled thither have seen only parts of it, and what they relate is mostly from hearsay".

Our 16th century travellers, however, unlike the Greek observers, do not speak from hearsay and their statements as a rule can well stand the test of "an impartial and unprejudiced consideration" on which Strabo rightly insists.

It is curious that two of these four travellers should be speaking to us of the first half of the century, while the other two speak of the second half. It is remarkable that all of them speak of the same outstanding features of the life of the people,—their weaving, their muslins, their many-coloured woven cotton stuffs, their seaports and trading operations, their marriages, the cremation of their dead, the sanctity they attached to the Ganges, their respect for Brahmins, their shrines and holy places, the sanctity attached to all animal life by certain sections of the community, and so forth. Most remarkable of all is the fact that what the travellers speak

of, are also some of the things which the Bengali poet celebrates in his pages, thus supplying convincing corroborative evidence of each other's trustworthiness. The regret of the modern reader is therefore all the keener that these travellers did not enlighten us a little more regarding the inner life of the people of Bengal and the administrative systems and political institutions of those days. But in the nature of things, that could not be in the 16th century. For a partial realisation of that, at least as far as the wider India is concerned, we have to wait till the days of our stately ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, and of our dear old gossipping (may I add, scandal-loving) Manucci, whose chronicle, containing as it does a record of a long and protracted stay in the country, is a precious possession to every student of Mogul India. Palimbothra had her Megasthenes ; would that 16th century Bengal had her Megasthenes also! But even Megasthenes tells us nothing of the life of the Greek Princess with whom he came to India, and little of the religious life of the people. It may be that diplomatic considerations withheld him from talking about these things. It may be that he did write of these matters, and the parts of his work which spoke of these, the really vital elements in the life of the people, have been lost to us, and unquestionably what little of Megasthenes we have is of engrossing interest and of immeasurable value to us. Yet, after all, religion is the soul of the people in India. For that, and for the inner life of the people in the Bengal of the 16th century, we must go to our contemporary Vernacular Literature.

APPENDIX

TO

LECTURES V AND VI.

That the Indians have been a commercial people from the remotest days of which we have any written record is now no longer to be disputed. It is said in the Rigveda that "merchants desirous of gain crowd the great waters with their ships." The code of Manu provides, "Let the king establish rules for the sale and purchase of all marketable things, having duly considered whence they come, if imported, whither they must be sent, if exported." We feel that we are among products from India when reading of King Hiram's trade in the Ophir—"once in three years came the navy bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks" (I. Kings. Chapter X.) The natives of the land have given the name of their father-land to that valuable dye which has certainly been known in Europe by the name of *indico* from the time of Pliny, who says "cast the right *indico* upon live coals, it yieldeth a flame of most excellent purple," and in reference to which Bancroft in his work on colours remarks that "the natives of India deserve praise for having many thousand years ago discovered means by which the colourable matter of the plant might be extracted, oxygenated and precipitated from all other matters combined with it."

The evidence of Sanskrit literature* tends to confirm the same conclusion. As is explained by Mrs. Manning in her work on ancient and mediæval India, "The code of Manu requires the King to determine the prices of commodities and also the trustworthiness of the weights and measures used. And that the transactions contemplated were not restricted to local products is evident from reference to the charges for freight for articles in river boats, and the undetermined and larger charges to which sea-borne goods were liable. The account of King Yudhisthira's coronation in the Mahabharata affords an instance of precious articles from distant lands brought into India. So also in the Ramayana, we read that when Rama and his brothers married, the

* The Hindus in their ancient works of poetry are represented as a commercial people. *Heeren.*

brides were clad in silk from China.* The drama of Sakuntala again affords testimony of the importance attached to trade. A case, written on a leaf, is presented at the footstool of the king. It states that a merchant, who had extensive commerce, had lost a son, and left a fortune of many millions.

We might speak also of the caravan of merchants in the well-known story of Nala and Damayanti, but not to multiply instances, we will merely observe that merchants are constantly being introduced into Sanskrit fiction, and equally often into Buddhist legend. They seem to have been always at hand to give variety and movement to the monotony of daily life."

We may in this connection refer to the *Periplus* of Arrian, the work entitled the Circumnavigation of the Red or Indian sea, which relates the voyage of a merchant from Egypt to the western coast of India performed sometime within the first two centuries of the Christian era. The internal commerce of the peninsula is represented as unexpectedly thriving and "that confidence may be attached to his narrative has been proved by the discovery of the remains of important cities in the positions which he has described as emporia. This testimony is corroborated by Hindu writings and the character and civilisation of the various races inhabiting the peninsula." Irving in his essay on the commerce of India further explains—

That the native commerce, was not simply confined to that by land, may also be gathered from Menu, who in one chapter treats of the interest of money lent on risk, which was to be determined by "men well

* The mode of life peculiar to the higher classes, especially in courts of cities, and represented to us by the poets, implies the existence of a multitude both of natural and artificial wants, only to be satisfied by a corresponding system of active internal commerce.

Let us only compare the picture which the Ramayana draws of the capital town of Ayodhya. "It was filled with merchants, and artificers of all kinds; gold, precious stones, and jewels were there found in abundance; every one wore costly garments, and necklaces." And in another passage, in allusion to the mourning which took place on the death of the king, the poet says: "The tables for the sacrificial offerings are empty, the shops where they sold garlands are closed; and the bankers and merchants do not show themselves as usual." Such descriptions as these, even though we make every allowance for poetic colouring, will nevertheless show what was the Hindu idea of a rich and flourishing city, and we may be sure it would represent nothing but what was perfectly well-known.

Heeren.

acquainted with sea voyages and journeys by land"; and, in another passage, enumerates among the fourth class, Sudras, "the shipbuilders and sailors, as many as navigate rivers." The further importance which, in this celebrated Code, is attached to commerce, may be conjectured from the fact, that the third class of Hindoos is absolutely set apart for its pursuit. That it was not simply petty trade, but an extensive intercourse between distant regions which is contemplated, is proved by the nature of the duties which are enjoined. Their principal occupation is defined to be "The keeping of herds of cattle (with which in India commodities are transported from place to place), to carry on trade, to lend on interest, and cultivate the soil. Hence they are to turn their attention to practical knowledge. They must be thoroughly acquainted with all commodities and soils, with the productions and wants of other countries, with various dialects and languages, and whatever else has direct or indirect reference to purchase and sale. In one word, they are to be perfect men of business."

Hence in a popular poem constant references to trading operations and to the trials and experiences of merchant princes in course of perilous journeys to distant lands in quest of trade do not come as a surprise to the modern reader.

Heeren in his dissertation on the commerce of Ceylon shows that "for the space of about two thousand years, Ceylon continued to be the common emporium of southern commerce; and that consequently commercial history in general, but particularly with reference to India, is mainly dependent on that of Ceylon." No apology is therefore needed for inserting here a circumstantial account of Ceylon and of its commerce which has come down to us from about the middle of the sixth century of the Christian era.

About A. D. 560, and in the reign of the emperor Justin II, a merchant named *Cosmas*, who afterwards became a monk, travelled for commercial purposes as far as Adule, at that time a celebrated port, belonging to the king of Axume in Ethiopia and situate near to Arkeeko. Here he met with a certain acquaintance by the name of *Sopater*, just then on his return from Ceylon, which he had visited in the capacity of a merchant. It was from the report of this voyager that *Cosmas* drew his account of Ceylon and its commerce as it then existed, and which he has inserted in his *Typographia Christiana*, a work of unquestionable varacity. The following is this account of Cosmas, which is transcribed from the version of Montfaucon. "Taprobane is a large island in the Indian ocean called by

the Hindus Silediva, where the precious stone termed hyacinth is found; and it is situated above the pepper country. A great number of small islands, closely adjoining, surround it; each of which contains fresh-water springs, and abounds with cocoanuts. According to the inhabitants, the large island is nine hundred miles in length, and as many in breadth. It is governed by two kings, who are always in a state of mutual hostility; one of them possesses the mountanous region producing the hyacinth stone, and the other, the remaining portion of the island, and which are the commercial towns and harbours, and which is, therefore, most frequented by the neighbouring people. There is also a church of Christians* from Persia, under the inspection of a presbyter ordained in the latter country, together with a deacon, and other eccleciastical officers. The native inhabitants, with their respective kings, profess a different religion. Numerous temples are to be seen in the island, and in one of them particularly there is said to be a hyacinth of great brilliance and uncommon size, being almost as large as the cone of a pine-tree; this stone is placed in an elevated and conspicuous situation within the sacred edifice, and when illumined by the rays of the sun, reflects a light which may be seen a considerable distance, forming altogether a most curious and extraordinary spectacle.

"A great number of vessels from all parts of India, Persia, and Ethiopia are in the habit of trafficking with Ceylon, so conveniently situated as it is with regard to those countries, while the island itself has also a numerous fleet of ships belonging to its own merchants. From the interior countries of the East, that is to say, from Sina and other mercantile places, she procures silk, aloes, cloves and tzandana, with other articles of commerce peculiar to those regions: these, in her turn, she transmits to more distant countries; to Male where the pepper grows; to Calliana, a place of great trade, from whence the return cargo consists of native brass, sesamum-wood, and other articles adapted for clothing; further, she transports them to Sindus, the country of musk, or castoreum, and spikenard; and also to Persia, Homerite, and Adule; from all these parts Ceylon receives an exchange of merchandise, which, together with her own produce, she forwards into the interior of India. Sinde, moreover, is the commencement of the last named country; for the river Indus divides it from Persia. The principal trading towns of India are Sindus, Orrhota,†

* These Christians were Nestorians.

† Surat.

Calliana* Sibon, Parti, Mangaruth, Salopatana, Nalopatana, and Pudapatana, the last five being included under the province of Male†. About five days and nights' journey further (from Male) is Silediva, or Taprobana. Still further, on the continent, is Mavallo, which produces a peculiar kind of shell-fish; and Caber which affords the alabandanum. Next to this is the country where cloves grow; and lastly, Sina, whence silk is procured; beyond this there is no other region, the ocean forming the boundary of Sina to the east.

"The island of Silediva, therefore, being situated almost in the middle of India, and producing the precious stone called hyacinth, receives merchandise from all other countries and supplies them in its turn; it is consequently itself a place of very great mercantile resort. This I was told both by Sopater himself, and his fellow-travellers, who had sailed from Adule to the same island."

Let us place by the side of this account the following from Fa Hien:—

Fa Hien embarked from Tamalipti (then the principal emporium for the trade with Ceylon and China) in a large merchant-vessel, and went floating over the sea to the south-west. It was the beginning of winter, and the wind was favourable; and, after fourteen days, sailing day and night, they came to the country of Singhala. The people said that it was distant (from Tamalipti) about 700 yojanas.

The kingdom is on a large island, extending from east to west fifty yojanas, and from north to south thirty. Left and right from it there are as many as 100 small islands, distant from one another ten, twenty, or even 200 le; but all subject to the large island. Most of them produce pearls and precious stones of various kinds; there is one which produces the pure and brilliant pearl,—an island which would form a square of about ten le. The king employs men to watch and protect it, and requires three out of every ten such pearls, which the collectors find.

The country originally had no human inhabitants, but was occupied only by spirits and nagas, with which merchants of various countries carried on a trade. When the trafficking was taking place, the spirits did not show themselves. They simply set forth their precious commodities, with labels of the price attached to them while the merchants made their purchases according to the price; and took the things away.

Through the coming and going of the merchants (in this way), when they went away, the people of (their) various countries heard how pleasant

* The modern Callian, near Bombay.

† Malabar.

the land was, and flocked to it in numbers till it became a great nation. The (climate) is temperate and attractive, without any difference of summer and winter. The vegetation is always luxuriant. Cultivation proceeds whenever men think fit: there are no fixed seasons for it.

Thus there can be little doubt that India has always been in close touch with Ceylon, and the beginnings of the commercial intercourse between the island and the mainland may be traced back to the remotest antiquity, in support of which statement we may further refer to the testimony of Ptolemy, to the earlier accounts of Arrian and Pliny, and even to what Alexander the Great heard reported of the island of Ceylon during his expedition to India.

VII

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

SOCIOLOGICAL. (1)

VII

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

SOCIOLOGICAL.

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND FELLOW-STUDENTS:

I begin to-day by placing before you the following observation of a modern writer* in a recent publication entitled *Ethics and the Family*—Conquering legions have tramped backwards and forwards over the plains of India, and over her mountain ranges; but her peasants have ploughed their fields, administered their village business, worshipped their Gods, and perpetuated their families as continuously as her sages have remained plunged in thought. Yet every change of dynasty, every conquering race, has left marks on the social and economic life of the people.

Let us remember this in reviewing Mukundram's account of the foundation of a new town in India, and the description which follows of the various quarters of that town, affording as it does valuable materials for the reconstruction of the social and economic history of Bengal.

I proceed to place before you a more or less literal rendering of the poet's description and apologise at the outset for the quaintness of some of the details noticed by him.

Description of the Hindu Quarters. One quarter is called Kulastan (the Bhadralog quarter) where live the Rarhi Brahmins and the Barendra Brahmins, with their temples and *tols* (educational institutions). Here also live the unlettered Brahmins. They officiate as priests, and teach the rituals of worship. They mark their forehead with sandal, or

* Lofthouse.

with Tilak marks, they worship Devatas (idols) and run from house to house with bundles of offered rice tied in their cloth. They get a pice worth of sweetmeat in the house of the sweetmeat seller: they get a vessel full of milk in that of the milkman: while the oilmen give them their cup-full of oil. They get their monthly cowries from some houses and their *dalbaris* (dried balls of pulse) from others. The village priest thus swims in happiness. In the town of Guzrat, the citizens perform *shradhs*, the village priest officiating at the ceremony.

The *mantras* over, the Brahmin declares the *dakshina* (final present) to be a kahan (a little more than three annas of the present coin), and they haggle for the *dakshina*, tying the hand of the *Jusman* (person for whom the priest officiates) with Kusa grass.

The Ghatak Brahmins live by abuses. Their occupation is the reading of the Kulpanji (geneologies). People who do not secure their good will by presents, are abused at public gatherings till such time as the presents come.

We have, after this, a description of the astrologers, Sanyiasis, Vaishnavas, Khetris, Rajputs, Bhâts, and of the Vaisyas. Regarding the latter the poet says: "They serve Krishna. Some till lands, others tend cows. Some act as carriers* with pack bullocks, while some make purchases, at the proper season, growing crops, to sell them when the markets rise. Some travel from place to place, making purchases of precious stones. Some arrange for long journeys in boats with various goods, and bring back with them

* It is a mistake to confine the individuals composing this class to merchants, they being merely a subdivision, for it also includes husbandmen. Agriculture, breeding of cattle commerce and the lending of money upon interest are their prescribed modes of occupation. The breeding of cattle seems to have been the first destination of the Vaisyas to which agriculture and commerce were subsequently added. *Heeren.*

As to the occupation of the Vaisyas we may compare the *Code* of *Manu* which says: "The creator entrusted the management of cattle to the Vaisyas as he did that of men to the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas."

chamors, sandal wood and conch shells, Bhutia Chamors, shawl pusthus, and coats (angarakhi). They are always buying and selling and the Vaisyas are a happy lot at Guzrat."

The poet proceeds: Let us now describe the medicine men (Vaidyas): "They are the Guptas, Senas, Dasses, Duttas, etc., who live in this (Kulastan) part of the town. Some become famous by adopting the mercurial treatment prescribed in the Tantras. They rise in the morning and place a Tilak mark high up on the forehead; they wrap a piece of cloth round the head, and, putting on a fine dhuti and taking the puthi (Palm-leaf book) under their arm, they stalk forth in the different wards of the town.

"When the disease is curable, the Vaidhya beating his raised chest, proclaims a cure, but if the disease is incurable, he contrives a retreat, and asks for leave on various pretences. Says he, "If I can make a decoction of camphor, I am sure to effect a cure." "Search for camphor," says the sick man with all eagerness; and the medicine man on the pretence of procuring camphor, takes to his heels.

"Agardanis (a low class of Brahmins who officiate at funerals) live close to the Vaidyas, and they are in daily search for patients. They pay no taxes, but it is their due to take the cow that is given away by the dying to secure a safe passage across the river Bytarini (the Indian Styx) and the Til-dan (sesamum gift) with gold pieces."

We have then an account of the settlement of the Kayesthas, on the south side of the town, by themselves, as perhaps representing the middle class. They made their demands thus: "The Goddess Vani (Saraswati) is bountiful to us all. We can all read and write. We are the ornaments of a town. Decide to give us the best lands and houses and make them rent-free".

Then comes an account of the lower classes, the great mass who occupy the east end of the town.

"There settle the Hakil Gopes, who do not know what deceit or anger is, and in whose fields all kinds of wealth grow. Each of them has his home well-filled with pulses of sorts, linseed, mustard, wheat, cotton and molasses. There you find the oil-men who express the oil with the *ghani* (the oil-pressing machine) some of the class buy oil to sell it in the market. The black-smith, with his smithy, makes spades, axes, arms, and bridle pieces. With his betel and betelnuts settles the Tambuli. Here settle the potters who make earthen vessels and the earthen frames of *mridang* (drums) and *karras* (musical instruments).

"Hundreds and hundreds of pairs of dhuties are woven* at one place by the weavers of Guzrat. The Mali grows flowers, makes garlands and toy-flower houses, and with baskets full of flowers, he goes round the town selling his wares. *Barœes* are there, who grow betel in the betel nurseries, and if any one forcibly takes their things, the only resistance they offer is by crying *Do-hai*. The barbers are there, who go about with their leathern cases under their arms and looking-glass in hand. The confectioners manufacture sugar and confectioneries of sorts, and some of them go about the town with their stock of confectioneries for children. There settle the shroffs (Jains), who never kill animals and who abstain from meat all the year round. Those who make silk filatures are encouraged to settle here by the grant of rent-free lands, and

* According to the unanimous report both of history and tradition, *weaving* is reckoned among the most important manufactures of ancient India.

The variety of cloth fabrics mentioned even by the author of the *Periplus* as articles of commerce is so great that we can hardly suppose the number to have increased afterwards. We there read of the finest Bengal muslins: of coarse, middle and fine cloths, either plain or striped; of coarse and fine calicos; of coloured shawls and sashes; of coarse and fine purple goods, as well as pieces of gold embroidery; spun silk and furs from Serica. *Heeren.*

the Bir's heart rejoices when he sees the first red *silk sari** (pat-sari) being woven in his town.

"The Ganda Banias settle here. They go to the market with their baskets full of various kinds of spices and scents. The Sankha Banias (those who make conch-shell bracelets) cut conch shells, and some of them turn them into beautiful forms. The braziers, on their anvils, make *jharris* (a kind of jug), cups and *thalis* (large plates), lotas (large cooking vessels), and sips, dhabars (large vessels for washing purposes), pan-dans (betel-boxes with compartments for the various necessary spices), ghantas (ringing bells), singhashans (thrones for idols) and panch-dip (lamp stands). There are the goldsmiths who test gold and silver, and if there be any suspicion, melt them in the fire. They sell and buy, and, in the process, they draw to themselves the wealth of the people. Then there are two kinds of Dasses; the one class catch fish, and the other till the land. There are Bowries, who are the musicians of the town. The Bagdies, accompanied by ten or twenty spearmen, go about the town with arms. The fishermen make nets and catch fish, and the Kuch leads here a merry life. There are a number of washermen who dry the clothes washed by them on ropes hung up on poles. There are the tailors who sew clothes by the job, or who engage as servants on salaries, and all these occupy one ward of the town. There are the Shiulis who tap the khajoor (date) trees and make molasses from the date juice. There are carpenters in the market place and people who fry and prepare parched rice; and there are painters. The Patneys (ferrymen) are there, who receive the Raj-dues for ferrying people over. The bards settle there, and beg from house to house."

Then comes an account of people living outside the town: The Kols, Korengs, and amongst others, the Maharattas, whose

* Vestments of silk are usually worn on festal occasions. *Heeren.*

c.f. "All these ladies—Kausilya, Sumitra, the fair Kaikeyi—sumptuously clad in silk, hastened to the temples of the gods to offer incense." *Ramayana.*

occupation, it is said, was to tap for the cure of diseased spleens, and to operate for cataract.

The picture here presented affords one more proof, if any were needed, of the paramount influence which Brahmin priests have always exercised over Hindu Society, though the references to the unlettered priests who preside over the daily religious ceremonies of the villagers and who run from house to house on their daily errand as also to the *Ghatak* Brahmins who are represented as parasites preying upon society may perhaps be taken to be indications of a growing spirit of revolt against the abuses of priestcraft. The Hakil Gopes "in whose fields all kinds of wealth grow" must have been a happy group of people in those days. Then there were the medicine men—the traders and crafts men—the braziers, carpenters and goldsmiths—all of whom had their allotted part in the social economy of the day. Those medicine men were a set of empirics and some of them were bold impostors, while craftiness was as prominent a characteristic of the goldsmiths in the 16th century as it is to-day, for they buy and sell and *in the process suck the substance of the people.* The traders traded mostly in *anga rakhis, chamors* (yak-tails), sandal wood, conch shells, spices and precious stones, these being some of the prominent articles in the internal trade of the country; while the braziers supplied the domestic utensils such as, *thalis, lotas, sips, pandans, pancha pradips, dabars etc.*—There were the tailors, who sometimes hired themselves out by the month, sometimes worked on a system of contract.

Priestly influence.

Position of Ghataks.

Condition of Hakil Gopes.

Internal trade.

Domestic utensils.

The carpenters produced a few simple articles of furniture such as wooden stools and wooden bed-steads which sufficed for the simple wants of the people. It will thus be seen that the settlement is intended to be represented as a self-contained, self-sufficing unit, the

The community a self-contained unit.

citizens as a rule depending for the supply of their daily needs on the efforts of their neighbours.

The inference which Mukundram's account suggests I would venture to place by the side of the following classical description of the Indian Village Community :—

"Each Hindu township is, and indeed always was, a particular community or petty republic of itself ; and furnishes us with a vivid representation of the early state of things, when men first joined themselves together in societies for the purpose of relieving their mutual wants. Every community of the above kind, in addition to the landed proprietors, contains twelve different members ; the judge and magistrate (Potail); the registrar ; the watchman of the place and the fields ; the distributor of water for the purposes of inundation : the astrologer, for determining lucky and unlucky days and hours ; the cartwright ; the potter ; the washerman of the few garments for which there is occasion and which are generally manufactured in the family itself, or purchased at the nearest market ; the barber ; and lastly, the goldsmith, or maker of ornaments for the women and young maids, who is in many villages replaced by the poet (rhapsodist) and schoolmaster. These twelve functionaries are paid either in land, or in a certain quantity of grain, furnished by the agriculturists of the community. The whole of India is nothing more than one vast congeries of such republics. The inhabitants, even in war, are dependent on their respective Potails, who are at the same time magistrates, collectors, and principal farmers. They trouble themselves very little about the fall and dismemberment of empires ; and provided the township within its limits, which are exactly marked out by a boundary line, remain intact, it is a matter of perfect indifference to them who becomes sovereign of the country ; and therefore their internal administration always continues the same."

Sir Stamford Raffles, in his account of the small island of Bali, situate to the eastward of Java, has furnished us with a

remarkable instance of these petty states yet existing under their original constitution. "Here," says he, "together with the Brahman religion, is still preserved the ancient form of Hindu municipal polity, and its accompanying Potails, called by the natives Parbakes, in subordination to a Rajah of unlimited power."

I need hardly remind my friends that recent researches, and more specially the work done by our own settlement officers in India have largely modified the older views about the Indian Village Community. We now know that "Indian villages are divisible into two principal and widely different types of which the *assemblage of co-proprietors* formerly assumed to be the only normal one is not the more ancient." But though in Raiyatwari villages there is no communal ownership or tenure, there is little doubt that there is a head man and there are village officers, and as Sir Frederick Pollock puts it, "we may say there is administrative unity for many purposes."

Let me take you back for a moment in this connection to the 16th Century Vaisnav Literature, a literature which by the way illustrates the vitality of the Village Community in order to show how the testimony of that literature coincides with the testimony of Mukundram regarding the various trading groups in the social economy of the day. In the eighth canto of the *Adikhanda* of *Chaitanya Bhagabat*,* we have an account of the peregrinations of Chaitanya through the town of *Navadhip* on a certain occasion which enumerates for us in a most interesting fashion the various occupations and professions of his townsmen.

He goes first of all to the abode of the weavers, whence he passes on to and visits one after another, those who deal in *dairy products*, the *Gandhabaniks* who manufacture all kinds of scents, the *Malakars* who sell flowers and garlands

* *Vide* Note I.

of flowers, the *Tambulies* who deal in betels, the *Sankhabaniks* who manufacture things of conchshells, and lastly the *Sharbajnya*, the all-knowing astrologer, who knows all the past and can read the future, divining things with a prophetic eye.

Absence of drunkenness.

It may be noted with just pride that nowhere is there any reference to the prevalence of drunkenness among the people. No tavern is set up in the new settlement, not even among the *Bagdies* and other low castes who take their abode on the outskirts of the new Capital. Perhaps this is not altogether a fancy picture, and one naturally thinks in this connection of what Fa Hien said of the Indian Middle Kingdom *viz.*, "throughout the whole country the people do not drink intoxicating liquor. In the markets there are no dealers in intoxicating drink."*

Testimony of Fa Hien.

The Maharattas.

The poet's reference to the Mahrattas is indeed curious, for the Mahratta comes before us not as a freebooter to demand his *chauth*, but as a peaceful citizen experimenting upon the spleen of his deluded patient, much as the Madrasi Doctor is to be found about the streets of Calcutta in our days. Thus the *Borgis* of the times of Ali Vardi Khan were not the first Mahrattas known in these parts of the country.

I conclude this portion of my subject with a reference by anticipation to some of the incidents narrated in the second of the stories to be found in Mukundram's pages. The merchant Srimanta as well as his father saw a wonderful vision on his way to Ceylon. But the vision was visible only to the father and the son, and not even to the boatmen, the crew who manned the vessels in which the merchants proceeded

* Of strong and intoxicating liquors, ancient India was acquainted with more than one sort; the use of them however was by no means general. The Ramayana distinguishes the *Surs* who indulged themselves in these liquors from the *Asurs* who abstained from them. *Heeren.*

to Ceylon. The ruler of Ceylon was loathe to believe the statements of the Indian merchants—who were thus forced to appeal to the testimony of the boatmen, and though the boatmen could have saved themselves and their masters from captivity by telling an untruth, never hesitated for a moment in truthfully declaring that they had not seen the sight. In the appeal* which the merchants make to their crew, we are told in unmistakable terms that the man who tells the truth is received in Heaven, that there is no sin more heinous than untruthfulness, that the earth which bears the burden of all refuses to bear the burden of the untruthful man.

I would leave the incidents to point their own moral and to suggest their own conclusions.

On a previous occasion, I ventured to speak to you of my strong feeling that there was a Renaissance in Bengal in the 16th century of the Christian era, and that the spiritual and intellectual awakening in Bengal proper was but part of a widespread movement affecting more or less the whole of India, and every department of life among the Indian population. An examination of contemporary records of life, as I have tried to show, leaves hardly any room for doubt on the point. Whether we note the toleration of the times, or a singular phenomenon like the prevalance of the cult of *Satya Pir*, the name itself redolent of the spirit of the Renascence, or whether we try rightly to interpret the significance of the love of the ruling race, the Mahomedans, for Sanskrit learning and of the mastery of Arabic and Persian by the Hindu devotees of Hindu learning, the inference suggested is the same. Further, the fact that Mukundram speaks of Bengal and of Gujurat almost in the same breath, would tend to

* সত্য বাক্যে স্বর্গ যায়
অসত্য সমান পাপ নাহি ত্রিভুবনে
অবনী বলেন আমি সবাকারে বই
মিথ্যা যে বলে তার ভার নাহি সই ॥

show that Gaur and Gujurat were two of the centres of the permeating influence and the visible activities of the day. It is a source of satisfaction to find this view partially confirmed by the materials put together in Mr. Havell's recently published, admirably executed work on Indian architecture. I refer to this work all the more readily, for I hold with Sir F. Burton that in architecture we have the highest expression of the artistic feeling of a people. I refer to it also because it recalls to our mind that quiet scene which was enacted in London early this year* amidst the beating of war drums and the unfurling of flags on the European continent, when a largely and influentially signed petition was presented to the Secretary of State for India containing the following remarkable dictum :—

English workmen of the 16th Century by the strength of their inherited craftsmanship made real the architecture of the Renaissance. The native architecture suffered, but the buildings were still living. Indian native architecture would suffer in the same way if it was required to take its inspiration from abroad, but if left to the craftsmen the product would still be living art.

Of the character and characteristic excellences of 16th Century Indian architecture, of the relation between Hindu art and Mogul or Islamic art I should not attempt to speak, though I believe a highly interesting treatise may be written on the influence of the bamboo in shaping the history of architecture in Bengal, and on the differences in the structural arrangements of Hindu temples and Mahomedan mosques due to differences in their respective rituals of worship, the one being individualistic, while the other is communal. As Ferguson tells us :—

> "It may be as well to explain that the roofs of the huts in Bengal are formed of two rectangular frames of bambus,

* February, 1913.

perfectly flat and rectangular when formed, but when lifted from the ground and fitted to the substructure they are bent, so that the elasticity of the bambu, resisting the flexure, keeps all the fastenings in a state of tension, which makes a singularly firm roof out of very frail materials. It is the only instance I know of elasticity being employed in building, but is so singularly successful in attaining the desired end, and is so common, that we can hardly wonder when the Bengalis turned their attention to more permanent modes of building they should have copied this one."

On the present occasion I content myself with placing before you just a few statements out of Mr. Havell's book which I have spoken of, my object being to invite the attention of the younger generation of our historical students to this department of Indian life and to the influence of the Moslem rulers on the canons of the Hindu *Silpa Sastras*, an influence which acted as a solvent on the rigidity of the traditional rules.

"When the subject is rightly understood, I have no doubt that the 16th Century rather than the 17th will be appreciated as the classic epoch of Mahomedan architecture in India. The Taj Mahal, the *Mati Musjid* at Agra and a few other buildings of Shah Jahan's time are unique in themselves and surrounded by a halo of romance which appeals strongly to popular imagination. But exquisite as those are in art and craftsmanship, they belong to the lyric rather than the epic school of architecture, and many of the buildings contemporary with them betray a weakness of design which was a faithful reflection of the approaching decadence of the Mogul Empire."

"In the beginning of the 16th Century Gaur and Gujurat, the former chiefly in brick and the latter mostly in stone, were the great creative centres of the architecture of northern India."

"The cusped arches of the early 16th Century buildings at Gaur are of the same type as those of Shah Jahan's palace at Delhi and many other of his buildings—both

> derived from Buddhist—Hindu prototypes. The bent cornices and curvilinear roofs of Gaur, derived from the Bambu construction of the Buddhists of Bengal, are found in many of the buildings of the Moguls and belong to the building traditions of modern Rajputana."
>
> "Gaur is important in the history of Indian architecture not so much for the monuments it bequeathed to posterity as for its influence on the living tradition of Indian architecture."

The 16th Century in Bengal saw the conception and the completion of the *Sona Musjid*, so called from its gilded domes, and the *Chota Sona Musjid* at Gaur under Hussain Shah and his son, Nasarat Shah, besides the *Jami Musjid* of Akhi Serajuddin. It is curious that while Mukundram just mentions the building of a temple dedicated to the great *Siva* in his new town, he makes no reference to the building of any elaborate Hindu temple compelling attention by its imposing splendour and magnificence. The absence of any such reference suggests that though multitudes of minor temples must have existed, no great monumental Hindu temple was built in Bengal in the 16th Century; and this we know to have been the case, though in the wider India outside Bengal, we find beautiful examples like *Govind Deva's* temple at *Brindaban*, which temple by the way has an interesting history of its own.

Further it may be noticed that in Mukundram we have a description of the planning and building of the new capital which shows that in those days people in India had definite ideas about town planning and that sanitary considerations as well as the practical requirements of convenience were by no means overlooked by them in their pursuit of the proverbial Oriental magnificence. This, however, does not come as a surprise to those who are familiar with our *Silpa Sastras*—or who think of the rise of a new town like Fatehpur Sikri. Indeed it seems to me that those who can speak with authority

on questions connected with architecture will find interesting parallels between Akbar's newly designed Fatehpur Sikri, with its mosque, its palaces and assembly halls, its baths and waterworks, its spacious caravanserais for travellers—and the configuration of the new capital described in the pages of our poet with its temple dedicated to Siva—its *Natsala*—its public gardens—its *Bhatsala*—its *Patsala* (Schoolhouse) and its buildings for the reception of weary travellers—points which might prove of interest to our modern town improvement committees.

Note I.

নগর ভ্রমণ করে শ্রীশচীনন্দন।
দেবের দুর্লভ বস্তু দেখে সর্ব্বজন॥
উঠিলেন প্রভু তন্ত্রবায়ের দুয়ারে।
দেখিয়া সম্ভ্রমে তন্ত্রবায় নমস্করে॥
"ভাল বস্ত্র আন" প্রভু বোলয়ে বচন।
তন্ত্রবায় বস্ত্র আনিলেন সেইক্ষণ॥
প্রভু বোলে "এ বস্ত্রের কি মূল্য লইবা?"
তন্ত্রবায় বোলে "তুমি আপনে যা দিবা॥"
মূল্য করি বোলে প্রভু "এবে কড়ি নাঞি॥
তাঁতি বোলে "দশে পক্ষে দিবা বা গোসাঞি॥
বস্ত্র লৈয়া পর তুমি পরম সন্তোষে।
পাছে তুমি কড়ি মোর দিও সমাবেশে॥"
তন্ত্রবায় প্রতি প্রভু শুভ-দৃষ্টি করি।
উঠিলেন গিয়া প্রভু গোয়ালের পুরী॥
বসিলেন মহাপ্রভু গোপের দুয়ারে।
ব্রাহ্মণ সম্বন্ধে প্রভু পরিহাস করে॥
প্রভু বোলে "আরে বেটা! দধি দুগ্ধ আন।
আজি তোর ঘরের লইব মহাদান॥"
গোপবৃন্দ দেখে যেন সাক্ষাৎ মদন।
সম্ভ্রমে দিলেন আনি সুন্দর আসন॥
প্রভু সঙ্গে গোপগণ করে পরিহাস।
'মামা মামা' বলি সবে করেন সম্ভাষ॥
কেহো বোলে "চল মামা! ভাত খাই গিয়া।
কোন গোপ কান্ধে করি যায় ঘরে লৈয়া॥
কেহো বোলে "আমার ঘরের যত ভাত।
পূর্ব্বে যে খাইলা মনে নাহিক তোমা'ত?"
সরস্বতী সত্য কহে, গোপ নাহি জানে।
হাসে মহাপ্রভু গোপগণের বচনে॥

দুগ্ধ, ঘৃত, দধি, সর, সুন্দর নবনী।
সন্তোষে প্রভুরে সর্ব্ব গোপ দেয় আনি॥

গোয়ালাকুলেরে প্রভু প্রসন্ন হইয়া।
গন্ধবণিকের ঘরে উঠিলেন গিয়া॥

সম্ভ্রমে বণিক করে চরণে প্রণাম।
প্রভু বোলে "আরে ভাই! ভাল গন্ধ আন॥"

দিব্য গন্ধ বণিক আনিল ততক্ষণ।
"কি মূল্য লইবা?" বোলে শ্রীশচীনন্দন॥

বণিক বোলয়ে "তুমি জান মহাশয়!
তোমা স্থানে মূল্য কি বলিতে যুক্ত হয়?

আজি গন্ধ পরি ঘরে যাহ ত ঠাকুর!
কালি যদি গা'য়ে গন্ধ থাকয়ে প্রচুর॥

ধুইলেও যদি গা'য়ে গন্ধ নাহি ছাড়ে।
তবে কড়ি দিহ মোরে যেই চিত্তে পড়ে॥"

এত বলি আপনে প্রভুর সর্ব্ব-অঙ্গে।
গন্ধ দেই বণিক্, না জানি কোন্ রঙ্গে॥

সর্ব্ব-ভূত-হৃদয় আকর্ষে সর্ব্ব-মন।
সে রূপ দেখিয়া মুগ্ধ নহে কোন জন?

বণিকেরে অনুগ্রহ করি বিশ্বম্ভর।
উঠিলেন গিয়া প্রভু মালাকারের ঘর॥

পরম অদ্ভুত রূপ দেখি মালাকার।
সাদরে আসন দিয়া করে নমস্কার॥

প্রভু বোলে "ভাল মালা দেহ মালাকার।
কড়ি পাতি লগে কিছু নাহিক আমার॥"

সিদ্ধ পুরুষ প্রায় দেখে মালাকার।
মালী বোলে "কিছু দায় নাহিক তোমার॥"

এত বলি মালা দিল প্রভুর শ্রীঅঙ্গে।
হাসে মহা-প্রভু সর্ব্ব পড়ুয়ার সঙ্গে॥

মালাকার প্রতি প্রভু শুভ-দৃষ্টি করি।
উঠিলা তাম্বুলী-ঘরে গৌরাঙ্গ শ্রীহরি॥

তাম্বুলী দেখয়ে রূপ মদন-মোহন।
চরণের ধূলি মহ দিলেন আসন॥
তাম্বুলী বোলয়ে "বড় ভাগ্য সে আমার।
কোন ভাগ্যে তুমি আমা' ছারের দুয়ার॥"
এত বলি আপনেই পরম সন্তোষে।
দিলেন তাম্বুল আনি, প্রভু দেখি হাসে॥
প্রভু বোলে কড়ি বিনা কেনে গুয়া দিলা?"
তাম্বুলী বোলয়ে "চিত্ত হেনই লহলা॥"
হাসে প্রভু তাম্বুলীর শুনিঞা বচন।
পরম সন্তোষে করে তাম্বূল ভক্ষণ॥
দিব্য পর্ণ কর্পূরাদি যত অনুকূল।
শ্রদ্ধা করি দিলা, তবে নাহি দিল মূল॥
তাম্বুলীরে অনুগ্রহ করি গৌর রায়।
হাসিয়া হাসিয়া সর্ব্ব নগরে বেড়ায়॥
মধুপুরী প্রায় যেন নবদ্বীপ-পুরী।
একো জাতি লক্ষ লক্ষ কহিতে না পারি॥
প্রভুর বিহার লাগি পূর্ব্বেই বিধাতা।
সকল সম্পূর্ণ করি থুইয়াছে তথা॥
পূর্ব্বে যেন মধুপুরী করিলা ভ্রমন।
সেই লীলা করে এবে শ্রীশচীনন্দন॥
তবে গৌর গেলা শঙ্খবণিকের ঘরে।
দেখি শঙ্খবণিক সম্ভ্রমে নমস্করে॥
প্রভু বোলে "দিব্য শঙ্খ আন দেখি ভাই।
কেমনে বা নিব শঙ্খ, কড়ি পাতি নাঞি॥"
দিব্য শঙ্খ শাঁখারি আনিয়া সেই ক্ষণে।
প্রভুর শ্রীহস্তে দিয়া করিল প্রণামে॥
"শঙ্খ লই ঘরে তুমি চলহ গোসাঞি!
পাছে কড়ি দিহ, না দিলেও দায় নাঞি॥"
তুষ্ট হইলা প্রভু শঙ্খবণিক বচনে।
চলিলেন হাসি শুভ-দৃষ্টি করি তানে॥
এইমত নবদ্বীপে যত নগরিয়া।
সভার মন্দিরে প্রভু বুলেন ভ্রমিয়া॥

সেই ভাগ্যে অদ্যাপিহ নাগরিকগণ।
পায় শ্রীচৈতন্য নিত্যানন্দের চরণ॥
তবে ইচ্ছাময় গৌরচন্দ্র ভগবান্।
সর্ব্বজ্ঞের ঘরে প্রভু করিলা পয়াণ॥
দেখিয়া প্রভুর তেজ সেই সর্ব্বজান।
বিনয় সম্ভ্রম করি করিলা প্রণাম॥
প্রভু বোলে "তুমি সর্ব্বজান ভাল শুনি।
বোল দেখি, অন্য জন্মে কি আছিলাঙ আমি?"

Chaitanya Bhagabat.

VIII.

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

SOCIOLOGICAL (II).

VIII

BENGAL IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

SOCIOLOGICAL (II).

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR AND FELLOW-STUDENTS:

I now pass on to review the strictly sociological information supplied by contemporary vernacular literature regarding Bengal in the Sixteenth Century, A.D. But before I ask you to consider the validity of the conclusions which I venture to suggest in this connection, permit me to place before you in its briefest outline the argument of Mukundram's story.

Indra's son having incurred the displeasure of the great Siva was cursed to live on earth as a mortal for a term of years. On his death his disconsolate wife immolated herself on his funeral pyre, and the two were born on earth as members of neighbouring families of hunters. In due course they were united in happy wedlock—but they got tired of the privations of a hunter's life, when the Goddess Chandi appeared in their cottage in the shape of a beautiful young maiden to relieve their misery—but also to popularise her cult and to win worshippe rs for herself. She placed untold wealth at the disposal of the hunter, advised him to clear parts of the primeval forest and to select a suitable site for a new city—This is the beginning of the Kingdom of Gujurat.

In the meantime Kalinga was afflicted with a dire flood which forced the inhabitants to migrate to Gujurat with all their trade guilds and caste groups. Through the machinations of a wily Kayastha war broke out between Kalinga and Gujurat, the hunter king was taken prisoner, but soon released and peace was restored between the two Kingdoms. On the expiry of the term of the curse, the hunter king and the queen

were translated to heaven leaving Gujurat in the keeping of their young son—and the cult of Chandi began to flourish in Gujurat as well as Kalinga.

Fortunately we have a history of Gujurat (*Mirat Ahmadi*) from the pen of a Mahomedan writer—who was a revenue minister in the state, had ample materials at his disposal and displayed a critical turn of mind. I give in full what he has to say about the foundation of Gujurat, as the coincidences between the Hindu poet and the Mahomedan historian would suggest that a traditional account of the foundation of Gujurat was long prevalent in Hindustan, that both the poet and the historian were drawing upon this source and that the poet adapted and modified it to suit his purpose.

> In ancient times, the country of Gujurat was possessed by the Rajputs and Kulies; when every chief, being independent of another, was a person of power in his own domain. The army of Raja Phiru, (Porus), however, then Deva Raja of Kanauj, greatest of all the Rajas of Hindustan, was annually sent to collect the tribute; and after having done so, returned to the capital.
>
> One of the Raja's slaves, named Sawant Singh, having committed some fault, was put to death; and, as his house was plundered at the same time, his wife, while pregnant, fled towards Gujurat. On her journey to his country, she bore a son; who, being discovered in the wilderness by Raja Sil Deva, was carried to Palanpur, and their brought up by him. This boy, on arriving at man's estate, became so fond of evil company, that soon following the ways of his companions, he turned highwayman and robber. Having, at length, seized on some treasure on his way from Gujarat to Kanauj he was from that time, blessed with the smiles of fortune, and established his power and independence. Soon after he became intimate with a marketman named Champa, who weaned him from his evil propensities; and having now assumed the title of Ban Raj or Bansraj, he laid the foundation of the city of Patan, and made it the seat of his Government. This occurred five years after he had first become independent; and from the time until the foundation of the good city of Ahamadabad, Patan continued to be the royal residence and the capital of Gujurat.

> When Ban Raj had resolved on founding the city of Patan, he went in search of a site favourably situated for the amusement of the chase; and having at length met a shepherd, was informed by him where a suitable place might be found. The shepherd, whose name was Anhill, stipulated that the city should be named after him; saying at the same time, that he had there seen a hare beat a dog by her exertion and agility. The ground was selected; and when a population had collected, received the name of Anhilwarah. This became known by degrees under the name of Nahrwalah; which when the population increased, and the town became a place of note, was changed to Patan; for in the Hindi language they call a favoured town and a royal residence Patan. The era of the foundation is 802 of Vikramaditya corresponding to A. D. 817."

To those who may feel tempted to examine the poem for themselves, I would commend the characterisation of that smooth-tongued wily village banker who never loses an opportunity of earning a penny—honest or dishonest, and the scenes which follow the appearance of the goddess in the hunter's cottage in the disguise of a young maiden. Now comes the first cloud, the first flutter in the simple life of our heroine, who had lived so long happily, warbling her native wood notes wild. She suspects a possible rival in the young maiden before her, and she appeals to her legendary lore and to her whole stock of historical examples of Indian womanhood to prove that the chiefest virtue of the wife is devotion to the husband. She tries her best to persuade the maid to leave her cottage. But all to no purpose. Then she runs to her husband—her eyes red with weeping. The hunter in his surprise enquires what could be the matter with her. She had no co-wife and no sister-in-law—why then should her eyes be red? Every Indian reader would at once perceive the force of the implications in these references to the sister-in-law and the co-wife. The sections of the poem, however, which give an account of the settlement of the various castes, trading groups and craft guilds in the new town are, as already indicated, the sections which are of engrossing interest to the

student of Indian institutions. Here I propose to discuss only a few questions of subsidiary importance strictly from the sociological point of view.

(*a*) Did polygamy prevail? The poem leaves absolutely no doubt that polygamy was prevalent in Hindu society in the poet's day, though it was not regarded with high favour The references to it and to its consequences are too numerous not to have been suggested by familiar incidents in the daily life of the people. The heroine of the poet's second episode has her cousin as her co-wife. But obviously there was a volume of public opinion and strong feeling against it.

(*b*) What was the usual age for marriage? One poor fellow who lives in single blessedness till his twenty-fifth year is spoken of by the poet as an object of pity. The hero of the second story is married in his eleventh year. As to the marriageable age for girls, we have a most interesting scene in the second story in which a house-holder, the father of an unmarried daughter of twelve summers, is severely taken to task. In the scene is summed up the public opinion on the subject, and we are told that the father is lucky and worthy of the favour of the Gods who can get his daughter married in her ninth year—but he is worthier still who succeeds in getting her married in her seventh year. The inference from this is natural that in the majority of cases, marriages took place between seven and nine. It was in very rare cases that marriage was put off till the twelfth year.

In this connection, I would invite reference to what our sixteenth century European travellers tell us, to the testimony,

that is to say, of Caeser Frederick, Ralph Fitch and others which I have already quoted. I would also remind you of the following Regulations regarding marriages which Akbar promulgated:—

> Every care bestowed upon this wonderful tie between men is a means of preserving the stability of the human race, and ensuring the progress of the world; it is a preventive against the outbreak of evil passions, and leads to the establishment of homes. Hence His Majesty, inasmuch as he is benign, watches over great and small and imbues men with his notions of the spiritual union and the equality of essence which he sees in marriage. He abhors marriages which take place between man and woman before the age of puberty. They bring forth no fruit, and His Majesty thinks them even hurtful; for afterwards, when such a couple ripens into manhood, they dislike having connexion, and their home is desolate.
>
> Here in India, where a man cannot see the woman to whom he is betrothed, there are peculiar obstacles; but His Majesty maintains that the consent of the bride and bridegroom, and the permission of the parents, are absolutely necessary in marriage contracts.
>
> Marriages between near relations His Majesty thinks highly improper. He says, "The fact that in ancient times (?) even, a girl was not given to her twin brother, ought to silence those who are fond of historical proofs. Marriage between first cousins, however, does not strike the bigoted followers of Muhammad's religion as wrong; for the beginning of a religion resembles, in this regard, the beginning of the creation of mankind."
>
> His Majesty disapproves of high dowries; for as they are rarely ever paid, they are mere sham; but he admits that the fixing of high dowries is a preventive against rash divorces. Nor does His Majesty approve of every one marrying more than one wife; for this ruins a man's health, and disturbs the peace of the home. He censures old women that take young husbands, and says that doing so is against all modesty.

He has also appointed two sober and sensible men, one of whom enquires into the circumstances of the bridegroom, and the other into those of the bride. These two officers have the title of *Tuibegi*, or masters of marriages. In many cases, the duties are performed by one and the same officer. His Majesty also takes a tax from both parties, to enable them to shew their gratitude. The payment of this tax is looked upon as auspicious. In demanding this tax, the officers have to pay regard to the circumstances of the father of the bride.

(*c*) Did our ladies read and write in those days? We have in the poem the story of a forged letter. The forgery is planned and executed by two women. One of these certainly does not belong to the highest rank in society. The forged letter is placed in the hands of another lady who reads it for herself, discovers that it was not in the handwriting of the person by whom it purported to be written—and declares it to be a forgery. There is evidence to show that women belonging to the lower ranks of society such as house-maids were illiterate; but there is nothing in the poem to indicate that public opinion discountenanced female education. If this was the case in the Bengal of the sixteenth century, it would be interesting to enquire into the causes of the decay of female education in Hindu society in the earlier decades of the nineteenth Century.

(*d*) Were the Hindus strict vegetarians? Here again the poem leaves absolutely no doubt. In their youthful days, the hunter and his wife earn their living by the sale of wild fowls and game of all sorts, and they have little difficulty in finding customers. Curiously enough in the earlier edicts of Asoka we have references to the pleasures of the

chase and to the slaughter of animals and consumption of meat on a large scale on festive occasions.

Without trenching on controversial grounds, I may just note that there is a remarkable passage in the *Brihadaranya Upanishad* which thus concludes:—" He who desires to have a son unvanquished in the assembly of Pundits and the speaker of a speech respected by all, who can explain all the Vedas and lives a long life, should eat rice cooked with flesh and clarified butter ; whether the flesh be that of a bull or a ram." Whatever may be thought of the value of this *recipe*, the passage under reference leaves little doubt that the Indo-Aryans at a certain stage of their history did believe that a meat-eating people necessarily excels in mental vigour as well as in physical prowess.

In this connection students of 16th Century *Vaisnav* Literature would be inevitably reminded of the gorgeous descriptions of feasts and vegetable dishes to be found in the pages of *Chaitanya Charitamrita* as also of the *Chaitanya Bhagabat*—preparations "of herbs and other country messes, which the neat-handed Phillis dresses." Similar gorgeous descriptions are also fairly frequent in the pages of Mukundram. Thus there can be little doubt that these vegetable dishes were highly esteemed by the people. And indeed the details of the *recipes* are such as may suggest points to our modern Professors of culinary art and to the somewhat dulled and jaded taste of a generation nourished on a too exclusive meat diet.

(*e*) From the materials supplied by the poem it would be easy to make up a fairly long list of the utensils in use in Hindu households for domestic purposes. They had their plates and cups, water-jugs and candlesticks, all made of brass. I wonder if an ordinary Hindu house-hold in our days has added

very many to these conveniences of life—with the exception perhaps of the tea-cup and saucer especially since the days of Lord Curzon who among other things aimed at making the Bengalis a nation of tea-drinkers. Is this a proof of the conservatism of Hindu society—or does it show that the standard of living in those days was sufficiently high? Would it come as a surprise to the modern observer to be told that the hero of the poet's second story, the merchant prince actually dines off golden plates and golden cups?

While I have been calling your attention to evidence of prosperity in the Province and to our poet's references to high standards of living among certain sections of the community, I ought also to state that in the poem itself we have descriptions of almost extreme destitution. Indeed our hero himself —the hunter—had felt the pangs of poverty at a certain stage of his life—meeting at the same time on all hands from friends and neighbours, sympathy invariably materialised into substantial bounty—a fact which, as I had occasion to remark in one of my previous discourses, continues to be a marked feature of Hindu society down to the present day. In this connection I may be permitted to recall to your mind that in the pages of the *Ain-i Akbari* we have certain tables, which using modern phraseology may be spoken of as tables of prices and wages, giving us the prices of certain articles in daily use and wages of diverse classes of labourers and artisans, mechanicals and handicraftsmen. One has always to think of differences in the purchasing power of money,* but the figures

* In this connection we may well remind ourselves of an instructive Appendix to Dr. Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce* entitled *Some Difficulties in the interpretation of historical statistics*. Dr. Cunningham says, "The interpretation of quotations of prices and other information of similar kinds is beset with many difficulties. It must be remembered that statistics only serve to set economic problems before us in a very precise form; the greatest care and skill is needed to solve the questions they present for our consideration. Figures, however correct they may be, show the amount of some changes,

in the *Ain-i Akbari* would justify us in stating generally that the material condition of labourers and artisans in Akbar's India was one of ease and comfort, an inference which is further corroborated by the contemporary records of life in the pages of our Bengali poet.

(*f*) One of the occupations of the low castes who settle on the outskirts of the new city of Gujurat is said to be the preparation of *Moja* and *Panai*, shoes and stockings. We know from the *Indika* of Arian that Indians so far back as the time of Alexander's invasion of India used to wear shoes made of white leather and these were elaborately trimmed, "while the soles were variegated, and made of great thickness, to make the wearer seem so much the taller." Our poet's reference to the *Moja* shows that it is not a thing which came into India only in our days. It is interesting to compare in this connection the following summary to be found in the pages of the *Ain-i Akbari* of the state of things in ancient Hindu society :—

While a woman is adorned by sixteen things, a man is adorned by twelve things *viz.* :—

(1) Trimming his beard, (2) Ablution of his body, (3) Drawing the Sectarial marks of caste, (4) Anointing with perfumes and oil (5) Wearing gold earrings, (6) Wearing the *Jama* fastened on the left side, (7) Bearing the *Mukuta* which is a golden tiara worn on the turban, (8) Wearing a sword

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but they do not in themselves give us any light as to the reason of the changes, or as to the ulterior results brought about in social life, or economic conditions. These must be the matter of carefully reasoned enquiry." "We must take account of cases where the modern labourer has to pay for things which the mediaeval labourer got for nothing, and of things which the modern labourer habitually uses, and which the mediaeval labourer never had at all. It is now recognised that the question of a labourer's comfort depends, not merely on his own wages, but on the family income. Before, then, we can get satisfactory informations regarding the standard of comfort we must know what opportunities there are for bye-employment and domestic industry."

(9) Carrying a dagger and the like at the Waist, (10) Wearing a ring on the finger, (11) Wearing Sandals or *Shoes*.

As to the *ornaments* prized by the womenfolk, one would gather from the descriptions in Mukundram's pages that these included the *bala* which is a kind of bracelet usually made of silver, the *kankan* which again is a variety of the bracelet surmounted with small knobs and usually of gold, the gold necklace with its five or seven strings of gold beads, the ornament for the ear, ring for the ten fingers and the sounding anklet of silver. Curiously enough in the Fifth Canto of the *Antakhanda* of *Chaitanya Bhagabat* we have an enumeration of the ornaments which were held in esteem at the time. The noteworthy point about the list* is that it reads like an inventory of the ornaments mentioned by Mukundram on various occasions and in various connections.

As to the *popular superstitions* of those days, they had their faith in love-compelling potions and such like preparations. One section of our poem speaks of a medicine which could endow childless women with children ; another speaks of a decoction which could win the undying love of man for the particular woman who uses it, securing her triumph over her rivals—the

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* কথো বা নির্ম্মিত কথো করিয়া নির্ম্মাণ।
পরিলেন অলঙ্কার যেন ইচ্ছা তান॥
দুই হস্তে সুবর্ণের অঙ্গদ বলয়।
পুষ্ট করি পরিলেন আত্ম ইচ্ছাময়॥
সুবর্ণ মুদ্রিকা রত্নে করিয়া খিচন।
দশ শ্রীঅঙ্গুলে শোভা করে বিভূষণ॥
কণ্ঠে শোভা করে বহুবিধ দিব্যহার।
মণি-মুক্তা-প্রবালাদি যত সর্ব্বসার॥
রুদ্রাক্ষ বিরাল অক্ষ সুবর্ণ রজতে।
বান্ধিয়া ধরিলা কণ্ঠে মহেশের প্রীতে॥
মুক্তা-কসা সুবর্ণ করিয়া সুরচন।
দুই শ্রুতিমূলে শোভে পরম শোভন॥
পাদপদ্মে রজত নূপুর বিলক্ষণ।
তদুপরি মল্ল শোভে জগতমোহন॥

ingredients of which decoction would challenge comparison with the ingredients of the witches' cauldron in Shakespeare's Macbeth.

What were the *popular amusements* of the day? One must freely admit that gambling, betting and diceplaying occupied a prominent place among these. We hear of betting in the dealings of our merchant-adventurers with the King of Ceylon, and when one of these merchant princes goes to Gaur and there forgets his home, his native-land, his newly-wedded wife in the indulgence of delights which cannot be described as "unreproved pleasures free," his addiction to diceplaying is specially spoken of by the poet. Even husbands and wives are represented as amusing themselves with diceplaying. Indeed, this has been a national weakness of the Indo-Aryans from the earliest times, and one has only to think in this connection of the description of the great match at diceplaying at Hastinapur to be found in the pages of our Mahabharata. Hence it is interesting to note the following observations of Tacitus regarding the Teutons—"What is extraordinary, they play at dice when sober as a serious business, and that with such a desperate venture of gain or loss, that when everything else is gone, they set their liberties and persons on the last throw. The loser goes into voluntary servitude, and though the youngest and strongest, patiently suffers himself to be bound and sold. Such is their perseverance in a bad practice."

Pigeon-flying was another of the popular amusements. It is through pigeon-flying that one of our merchant princes has his first interview with his future wife and illustrates once again the truth of the dictum, "Now, dead shepherd, I see thy saw of might, who ever loved that loved not at first sight." It used to be played in some such fashion as the following :— each player had a pair of pigeons, one male and the other female.

The male pigeon was let loose, while the female was held in the hand. He whose pigeon* soaring high, came down and perched on the hand of the owner out of fondness for its mate, was considered to be the victor.

Pigeon-flying was one of the favourite amusements of the Emperor Akbar, and this is what we read in the *Aini Akbari.*

> "His Majesty calls pigeon flying 'ishqbazi (love-play). This occupation affords the ordinary run of people a dull kind of amusement; but His Majesty, in his wisdom, makes it a study. He even uses the occupation as a way of reducing unsettled, worldly-minded men to obedience, and avails himself of it as a means productive of harmony and friendship. The amusement which His Majesty derives from the tumbling and flying of the pigeons reminds of the ecstacy and transport of enthusiastic dervishes: he praises God for the wonders of creation. It is therefore from higher motives that he pays so much attention to this amusement.
>
> [The pigeons of the present age have reached a high state of perfection. Presents of pigeons are sent by the kings of Iran and Turan; but merchants also bring very excellent ones in large numbers.]
>
> When His Majesty was very young, he was fond of this amusement; but afterwards, when he grew older and wiser, he discontinued pigeon-flying altogether. But since then, on mature consideration, he has again taken it up."

We have in our poem also a list of juvenile amusements—the amusements of lads of the schoolgoing age, which includes mock-fights, blind man's buff, swimming, climbing of trees, *Bagchal* and other games of a like kind which are still in great favour among our rural population.

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* পায়রী রাখিয়া হাতে, উড়াইল পারাবতে
আগে আইলে তার হবে জয়।

In my rapid enumeration, I can only afford to make a bare reference to the soul-stirring *Kirtans* which the *Vaisnavas* brought into vogue and in which they found a potent instrument for popularising their cult, and to the recitations of the court-poets who formed a necessary part of the establishment of the *Narapatis*—the lords of villages of those days.

There were further the rude theatricals of those times giving dramatic representation of scenes culled from the life of *Krisna*, which appealed strongly to popular imagination and which remind us of the mysteries and miracle plays of Pre-Elizabethan England.

The historian has gratefully to acknowledge the immense services rendered by all these, and through these by *Vaisnavism* to the cause of culture and of popular education in 16th Century Bengal. The elevating influence of these in implanting high ethical ideals in the minds of the common people can hardly be questioned, while Mukundram's pages and other contemporary records leave no doubt of the fact that schools and educational institutions were lovingly cherished, and that learning—even Sanskrit learning, had ceased to be the monopoly of the Brahmins—mainly owing to the influence of *Vaisnavism* in the Bengal of the 16th Century. In the account which the poet gives us of the early education of one of our merchant adventurers, we are told that the boy—a non-Brahmin—had a thorough mastery of Sanskrit Grammar and rhetoric and that *Meghaduta*, *Naishadha* and *Kumarsambhavam* were some of the Sanskrit works he had critically studied. Thus *Vaisnavism* has been one of the chief contributory causes of the undertone of religious feeling which still constitutes the base of the character of the mass of our rural population, and of the poetry which is still found in their life in the midst of the fierce struggle for existence in these days of mechanical inventions and manufacturing industries.

I conclude my present rambling comments by calling attention to a few rather curious points:

(*a*) Our merchant princes on their way to Ceylon pass by a tract of land which is spoken of as *Firinghi desha* and the sailors when passing by that region row without intermission as hard and as fast as they can for fear of *Haramadas*. What are the references here, firstly in the *Firinghi desha* and then in the *Haramadas*? Have we here an Indianised version of the Spanish word Armada? If so, the poet was evidently thinking of the dreaded Portuguese privateers of the 16th Century, and his words throw an interesting side-light on the relation which then existed between the Portuguese and the native inhabitants of the Indian maritime districts. Probably Sir William Hunter is thinking of the same state of things as our Bengali poet when he says, "The ravenous hordes let loose on India made the race name of Christian (Firinghi*) a word of terror, until the strong rule of the Mogul Empire turned it into one of contempt," and the historian incidentally refers to their buccaneering in the narrow seas, their pirate nests in the Bay of Bengal, their plunder of the coast and island princes.

(*b*) The mariners who man the sea-going vessels are spoken of as *Bangals*—which leaves little doubt that these were recruited from Chittagong and its neighbourhood. Thus the art of navigation in dangerous seas is an inheritance of Eastern Bengal from the remote past, and in these 16th Century

* As to the name *Fringi* and its signification, we are told by an old authority that Firinghi represents through Arabic and Persian the "Francos quo nomini omnes passim Christiani dicuntur." c.f "The Portugals which they call by the name of Fringes"

Bengal sailors of our poet with their uncouth dialect we have probably the predecessors of the modern *Lascars* of our *P.* and *O.* boats.

(*c*) The sly humour of the poet lends an indescribable charm to the speech of these sailors. Their dialect with the *S* all awry and invariably changed into *H* shows that the linguistic difference between Eastern Bengal and Western Bengal is not a thing of modern growth.

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